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BRIEFING: Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday received Mrs. Lee Kwan Yew, wife of the Singaporean prime minister, at the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) offices. Mrs. Lee, who was accompanied by her daughter, Lee Wei Ling, was briefed on QAF's development projects in Jordan. Mrs. Lee was interested in matters related to women's activities in politics, health care and other fields. She also heard a briefing on the activities of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) and the national plan for women that is expected to be incorporated in the country's national development plans (Petra photo)

Man stabs divorced sister in fit of anger — police

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 25-year-old woman was stabbed by her brother Friday and was listed in critical condition, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) and family sources.

The woman, identified as Taghrid A., had had an argument with her husband, who immediately divorced her the same day (Friday).

The woman, a mother of two, sought refuge at her brother's house, according to family sources.

A family member told the Jordan Times, an argument erupted between the brother, identified as M.A., and his sister regarding Taghrid's fight with her husband.

According to the family member, the brother asked his sister to return to her husband's house. The woman refused, the source said, and when the argument reached a deadlock, M.A. drew a knife and stabbed his sister in the stomach several times.

The woman was rushed to Al Bashir Hospital for treatment. Hospital sources told the Jordan Times that the woman's condition is critical.

According to relatives, the woman's brother is being held by police pending further investigations.

Police refused to give details of the incident.

Man dies from pesticides poisoning

A 19-year-old Irbid man died Friday of pesticide poisoning while spraying his garden, according to a police report.

The victim's father told police that his son, Mahmoud Ahmad, was spraying trees in the garden of his home with a chemical pesticide without wearing a safety mask. According to the father, the son finished his chore and left to his own house, the report said.

When the father went to check his son the next day, he discovered Mohammad's body.

The son was taken to Princess Basma Hospital in Irbid where he was declared dead on arrival.

An attending doctor at the hospital attributed the death to pesticide inhalation. A CDD official told the Jordan Times that there was a possibility that the victim suffered from a disease or inflammation which was aggravated by the pesticide spray thus causing his death.

The official urged all persons to wear safety masks and gloves when using pesticide sprays.

Upper House endorses sales tax

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament Saturday endorsed the draft sales tax law as it referred to it by the Lower House.

Several senators said that the proposed sales tax would give the government leeway for movement and help in earning funds to finance development projects and services for the public. Several senators said the tax is a national duty because the Kingdom was passing through a crucial stage and required a significant amount of public support to bring it to a stage of self-reliance and of taking free national decisions.

Some senators though had demanded that the draft sales tax be endorsed at the rate of 10 per cent as was originally suggested by the government. On May 8, the Lower House approved the draft sales tax law after introducing several amendments to it including lowering the tax to seven per cent.

The Lower House amendments were estimated to reduce revenues to JD 45 million from the JD 170 million initially expected to the government's proposal.

In Saturday's session, the senators also demanded that the Ministry of Finance start procedures for training cadres on the implementation of the law.

Commenting on remarks by the senators, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said his government was intent on reforming the public administrative system and improving civil servant salaries.

But he added that a pay increase of JD 10, for example, would require expenditures of a great deal more than what the seven per cent tax would provide.

He said that with the sales tax the government hopes to reduce the deficit in the fiscal budget and persuade the Kingdom's creditors that Jordan can and will resolve its economic problems.

Finance Minister Sami Gammoh told the House that the sales tax is the best possible system to help Jordan achieve its financial, economic and social aspirations.

Senate sends cable to U.S. Congress

AMMAN (Petra) — The Senate Saturday voiced its appreciation of the U.S. Congress decision to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. In a cable to the U.S. legislature in Washington, Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi said it was hoped that the Congress' decision would eventually help the people of Bosnia to acquire the necessary means for legitimate self-defence and freedom from occupation.

He said the Bosnian people have been exposed to a genocide and barbaric actions unparalleled in the modern age.

Mr. Lawzi expressed hope that the United States would assume its leading role to deter aggression and help ensure international law and the provisions and principles of the United Nations.

As to the fears of some senators that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would force the government to increase taxes following the implementation of the sales tax, Dr. Majali said such fears were groundless as the IMF and the World Bank can in no way impose on the government what it rejects.

Furthermore, the sales tax would provide protection to the limited income groups and would contribute to the protection of local industries and encourage exports, he said.

The finance minister, Mr. Gammoh added, has already prepared and trained a large and qualified cadre to apply the new law.

Dentists elect new president

Sa'id Abu Mayzer says he will focus on new dentists

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Sa'id Abu Mayzer clinched the presidency of the Jordan Dentists Association (JDA) elections with a wide margin against two other opponents.

Dr. Abu Mayzer earned 368 of the 710 votes cast by JDA members defeating candidates Ahmad Rashdan, who came in second with 196 votes, and Huda Fakhroury.

"The votes I received represent the majority and they were a result of support from all trends within the union," Dr. Abu Mayzer told the Jordan Times following the official announcement of the results.

Dr. Abu Mayzer said a...

priority of his two-year term is to open the door for all members to serve effectively and benefit from the goals and objectives his campaign sought before the elections.

According to Dr. Abu Mayzer, who started his dental career in 1978 at the Ministry of Health for one year before moving to the private sector, new doctors in practice will be given priority to his agenda.

"Since newcomers represent the majority in the union, I am going to focus on furnishing them with their needs and listening to their suggestions and problems," he said.

Other top priorities include amending some of the JDA's rules and legislations in order to absorb the increasing numbers of doctors, increase the

level of the profession and the association, and improve relations with official authorities.

Dr. Abu Mayzer, a father of three, said he is going to devote his time to serving the union.

"I know it will take some of my time, but it doesn't matter because it is worth working for the public sector."

Dr. Abu Mayzer will be assisted by his own bloc party which won a majority of the seats on the JDA board.

The new board comprises Haytham Naji (400), George Haddad (370), Azem Qadonmi (356), Amran Kabed (346), Hussein Laffy (347), Issam Zareini (332), Hisham Karadshah (315) and Ala Thaber (independent) (353) votes.

Nurse clinic instructors to graduate today

AMMAN (J.T.) — A ceremony to mark the graduation of the fifth group of Nurse Clinic instructors will take place at Al Bashir Hospital today.

Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas as well as several Jordanian authorities representing concerned institutions will attend the ceremony including major national training institutions, the University of Jordan, the University of Science and Technology, colleges of nursing, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, directorates for training and education and higher education, planning of the Ministry of Health, regional health directorates and directors of Al Bashir Hospital.

The embassy of Italy will be represented by ambassador to Jordan Romualdo Bertini.

The "Clinical Instructors Project" is a joint undertaking of the Ministry of Health and the Italian Development Cooperation. The project aims at improving the quality of nursing care in hospitals, through regular in-service training.

It has established, since 1988, a 9-month diploma course training nurse clinical instructors and the Institute of Specialised Nursing Studies in Amman. Recently the course has been attended by nurses from other countries in this region as well.

Since 1991 the project has developed further and now it operates also at the decentralised level through the Nursing Development Units.

Five units have been set up in the main hospitals of the country — Salt, Bashereh, Irbid, Zarqa, Kerak — to provide technical and logistic support to nurse clinical instructors working there.

The Italian government has contributed nearly \$2 million in this project's development.

During the ceremony a guide titled "In-service Training in Actual" produced by the project in Arabic and English will be distributed to each of the 61 nurses graduated till now. This guide helps the clinical instructors through the process of planning, implementing and evaluating the in-service training activities.

Civil ruling against Chalabi stems from untried case

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A civil court verdict passed against fugitive banker Ahmad Chalabi and four of his relatives who were found guilty of embezzlement stemmed from a case which was not tried in the state court three years ago, legal sources said Saturday.

They said Dr. Chalabi and the other accused were charged in 32 different cases related to the collapsed Petra Bank in the State Security Court and that the case that the Court of First Instance ruled last week was a 33rd case.

Part of the evidence collected during an investigation launched by a committee of experts in 1990 was used in the case and the charges were raised by a panel which is supervising the liquidation of Petra Bank since July 1990, said the legal sources, who preferred anonymity.

The State Security Court sentenced Dr. Chalabi to 35 years in prison and ordered a

fine of \$46 million, the amount it found the Iraqi-born banker had embezzled. Fifteen others — almost all of them in absentia like Dr. Chalabi — were also handed down stiff sentences.

The latest trial involved a \$2 million embezzlement case. The accused were ordered to return the amount and pay damages, interest and litigation charges of JD 4.5 million.

The court ruling, which is appealable, could pave the way for a fresh bid to have the accused extradited to Jordan. The State Security Court verdicts could not have helped Jordan much since most countries do not accept extradition requests based on martial law courts, as the case was with the State Security Court.

The Petra Bank case was the last case to be tried by the State Security Court under martial law regulations which were repealed after the case was over.

However, prospects of getting Dr. Chalabi, a self-

assumed Iraqi opposition leader, extradited to Jordan are not very bright, the legal experts said.

There are hundreds of fugitives from the Arab World and elsewhere living in England," noted one source.

The British government has not been very responsive to calls for their extradition to countries where they are either wanted for trial or are already tried and convicted.

It is unlikely that the London government would make an exception in this case.

Furthermore, the source noted, Dr. Chalabi also has a "political cover" — to that he is a member of the Iraqi National Congress which opposes the Baghdad government.

"It is easy for him to cite 'political immunity' and fight any extradition," the source said.

It was not immediately known how the liquidation committee intended to proceed after the verdict is appealed — a process which makes the ruling final.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Majali meets Singaporean leader
AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday met with visiting Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew. The two premiers reviewed bilateral relations and progress in the Middle East peace process. Discussions also covered scopes of cooperation between the two countries in several fields. Deputy premier Saeed Tell, Information Minister Jawad Anani, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and Minister of State Fawaz Abul Ghanam were present at the meeting (Petra photo)

Jordan, Syria to start economic talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The joint Jordanian-Syrian Economic Committee convenes here Sunday to discuss ways to promote their cooperation in trade and economic affairs. Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Imadi arrived in Amman Saturday to lead the Syrian side to the talks which are expected to last five days. The Syrian delegation will be taken on tours of economic projects and will meet the ministers of water, supply, industry and trade, transport and energy.

Visiting Tunisian team holds education talks

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the Algerian Ministry of Education led by Raghed Agoum met Saturday with Minister Al Masri, the Ministry of Education's secretary general, and discussed educational cooperation. Dr. Masri briefed the visitors on the country's educational system and vocational training programmes.

Farhan to leave for Rome

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Mahdi Al Farhan will Sunday leave for Rome on a several-day visit. During the visit, Dr. Farhan will meet with the director of the World Food Programme (WFP) for talks on the continuation of the WFP's support for the highlands development project in Jordan.

U.N. honours families

AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Day of Families will be observed for the first time on May 15, during the International Year of the Family (IYF).

Proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1993, this annual observance will build on the momentum to strengthen families which has been generated by the International Year. For 1994, the day's theme is "Building the Smallest Democracy at the Heart of Society," said a U.N. statement.

Families — the fundamental building blocks of any society — face unprecedented and varied challenges: urbanization, drug abuse, poverty, unemployment and political unrest, as well as changing economic and social conditions, said the statement.

Yet the family is the individual's primary source of emotional and material support.

It serves as the foundation for child development and, as such, holds the key to the solution of many of society's problems.

The family therefore deserves priority attention, said the statement.

Regional experts study progress of chemical safety programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates representing eight Middle Eastern countries including Jordan Saturday opened a four-day meeting in Amman to study the progress of an international programme for chemical safety run by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The programme aims at providing advice and guidance to the countries of the region on how to prevent chemical accidents such as that which occurred in Bhopal, India, said WHO expert John Haines. It also trains technicians on ways of dealing with chemical disasters, said Mr. Haines who is in charge of the programme in the Middle East region.

Mr. Haines told the opening session of a regional training workshop entitled "Health Effects of Chemical Accidents, prevention, preparedness and response," and attended by the meeting's delegates, that the programme aims at promoting chemical safety measures throughout the world.

This programme, according to Mr. Haines, is sponsored by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme

(UNEP) to ensure its success.

Opening the meeting, held at the WHO-Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA), health minister Abdul Rahim Malhas said that there was need for collective action and support from the world organisation to stem the spread of the harmful effects of chemicals.

Grave dangers are now threatening human life, they are the result of excessive use of chemical substances that spread in the atmosphere and effect soil and water, said the minister.

Police make arrests in railway thefts

KARAK (Petra) — Fifteen people accused of stealing parts of the Hijaz Railway Line and rail bridges have been apprehended, according to a police department announcement here Saturday. The announcement said that the group was suspected of involvement in thefts of rails and bridges over the past two months and their capture came about as a result of close cooperation among the police departments in Karak, Zarqa and Ruseifa where the group members were said to live. Railway parts are dismantled and sold illicitly for a significant amount of money, police officials explained.

Bani Hamida presents "Artists Expressions in Wool"

Weaving & Art Works by
Bani Hamida presents
"Artists Expressions in Wool"
Sponsored by
The Arab Bank
The Canadian Embassy
Exhibition Hall courtesy of
The Jordanian Construction Contractors Association Building
from Sunday, May 8 thru Sunday, May 15 (10am - 9pm)
SWEIFIEH ABDOON
ADDA HANO SHARIF 3D VOL.
BANI HAMIDA EXHIBITION
LUNCH GALLERY & ACCORDING
a Save The Children Project

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

* Film entitled "A Lion In The Streets" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m. (88 minutes)

CHOIR RECITAL

* Choir recital by Die Meistersinger at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* Lecture and film shots on the German city Hausstadt by Dr. Dieter Glade at Goethe-Institut at 6:00 p.m.

DIALOGUE

* Dialogue with sculptor Mona Sa'udi entitled "Women and Art" at the artist's workshop in Abdoun at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition by 46 artists entitled "He, Bonjour Monsieur La Fontaine" at the French Cultural Centre.
* Exhibition of paintings by artist Salman Al

Basri at Alla Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).

* Book exhibition and cultural displays at the British Council (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.).

* Exhibition by Iraqi artist Shawkat Al Rubale at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348).

* Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Ihab Elreih and another exhibition of ceramics by Sajida Elmeschickhi at Alla Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (Tel. 644451, 652823).

* Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Toual at Baladina Art Gallery (Tel. 687598).

* Spring exhibition of "Artists Expressions in Wool," the Bani Hamida project of art works and rugs at the Jordan Contractors Association Building in Abdoun (Tel. 612169).

* "Spring Exhibition" (quilts, cushions, lamp shades, etc) at the Zawadeh villa, opposite the Contractor's Association in Abdoun (Tel. 656172).

* Art exhibition by five Egyptian artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 56 Arab contemporary artists (Tel. 643251/2).

* Exhibition by artist Mohammad Muhraddha at Ab'ad Art Gallery.

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Jordan Times

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Art of the possible

U.S. SECRETARY of State Warren Christopher's impending visit to Syria and Israel in a bid to rekindle their negotiating track comes amidst renewed speculation that not much could be expected to emerge from his latest shuttle diplomacy. Washington has in fact predicted no imminent breakthrough in the Israeli-Syrian peace talks even though it made sufficient hints to suggest that their bilateral negotiations have entered a new stage and could come to fruition later on. This suggests that enough progress was attained during the last trip by Christopher to warrant its continuation.

It would naturally be unreasonable to presume that the secretary of state is coming back to the region on a wild goose chase. But, it must be remembered that Damascus has also made an issue of the fact that it is still on the U.S. list of countries sponsoring "terrorism" and has injected this matter into its contacts with Washington. Presumably this subject will figure highly on the Syrian leaders' talks with Christopher when he arrives in the Syrian capital Sunday. President Hafez Al Assad cannot be expected to accommodate Washington on its efforts to energise the Syrian-Israeli track as long as his country is viewed and treated as some kind of terrorist state.

Israel, on the other hand, seeks to know in advance the extent and scope of peace that Damascus would be willing to offer in return for Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. In this vein, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has proposed a phased Israeli pullout stretching over eight to ten years in order to test the workability of the Syrian peace intentions. Rabin has yet to confirm or deny, however, that Israel would be willing to withdraw completely from the occupied Syrian territory at the end of the tunnel.

President Assad insists, and rightly so, on receiving a clear commitment from Rabin that full withdrawal from the Heights would be in the cards in return for normalisation of relations between the two countries. What this complex situation boils down to is similar to the vexing egg-and-chicken syndrome where one set of questions begs the other. This is where Christopher may help by attempting to offer simultaneous answers to concurrent questions.

Bridging the gap between the two countries is still possible, and that, we guess, is why the secretary of state is coming back so soon to the region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily said Saturday that with the lapse of 10 days of fighting between the north and south Yemenis, the rift within that Arab country continues to grow with detrimental consequences for the future of Arab unity. The Yemeni people, who are the victims of this war, watch their leaders at each others' throats, devastating their own country to serve their own selfish interests, said the paper. It said those leaders were ignoring all calls for reason and end of bloodshed and were outbidding one another with their war communiques which speak of large numbers of innocent victims and extensive destruction to property and equipment. The continuation of the fratricide with such ferocity and ruthlessness can only deepen the division within the Arab World and can render the revival of Arab solidarity an impossible task. Jordan, which had led the mission of bringing about reconciliation between Yemeni leaders, is continuing its mission but it requires pan Arab support to save Yemen and its people. What is required is an urgent and prompt action on the part of the whole Arab World to contain and end the war in Yemen.

With the handing over of security in Jericho and Gaza to the Palestinian police the Palestinian people have stepped on the threshold to freedom and independence, Al Dustour daily said Saturday. It said that the event came as the fruits of a long struggle and the great sacrifices of the Palestinian people in the course of attaining their rights in their homeland. The Palestinians have now taken the first mile in their 1000-mile trip towards independence, but no one can deny the formidable tasks awaiting the Palestinian authority in the two areas of Gaza and Jericho, especially the responsibility for ensuring security. While waging the battle of peace the Palestine Liberation Organisation, backed by the Palestinian people, inevitably going to force the task of reconstruction that would enhance national unity.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Open the door for new banks

WHEN Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf came up with the idea of opening up the insurance market for new companies, and lifting the ban imposed by law on licensing new insurance companies, the insurance lobby, inside and outside Parliament, argued that 16 insurance companies are too many and more than sufficient to secure the environment of competition despite having an Insurance Union. They added: "If the closure of the door for licensing new bank is acceptable, the closure of the door for licensing new insurance companies should be equally acceptable." They concluded that liberalising insurance while leaving banks alone is sort of double standard.

They have a point. The issue must be treated as a matter of principle, irrespective of the available number of insurance companies and banks of all kinds.

The Jordanian economy was based at one time on the principle of strict regulation and protection. Economic management meant direct orders, closure and blanket bans. Even in manufacturing, the government was against granting a permission to a second factory to produce the same line of product. Competition was thought to be destructive.

All that gave way to a new liberal policy that welcomes competition, especially if the factories concerned are export-oriented. When the market is truly saturated, new capital will hesitate to enter the market. But smart capitalists and investors need not be protected from themselves. Feasibility studies, new technologies and outward looking are more qualified to give the guidance.

The majority of the members of Parliament showed themselves to be extremely enthusiastic about breaking the monopoly in insurance once and for all. It was the unexpected intervention of the prime minister that delayed a prompt decision by Parliament to go ahead and enact the amendment

of the law of insurance which would have ended the cap placed on the number of insurance companies operating in the country.

The liberalisation on the banking front should also be considered, and the door for licensing new banks should be possible due to the same logic and reasons.

If our monetary authorities feel that we have enough banks, they can make the conditions more strict. For instance the minimum paid-up capital of a new bank should not be less than JD 20 million. In this manner we can exclude light-weight adventurers who may get involved in a competitive market and fail to appreciate the fierce competition but the door will be open for new big banks and substantial investments, which we cannot pre-judge that they are not needed, or will not be successful. New banks may prove themselves to be more qualified than some of our old and stagnating banks, which refuse to develop, modernise and rise to the level of the current challenges.

Several banks lost their licences recently. Among them are: Petra Bank, Credit and Commerce International Bank, Mashreq Bank and Syrian-Jordanian Bank. At least these licences can be replaced if we have the right applicants.

The extremely high profitability of banks in Jordan in recent years, the rapid growth of shareholders equity, the fat dividends declared annually and the sharp rise of the going price of shares in the market relative to book value are visible evidence that an element of monopolistic profit exists despite the large number of banks. There is still plenty of room for qualified banks with large capital.

New banks and insurance companies should not confine themselves to the limited local market. They should branch out and seek new markets and create more jobs. Such banks should be seen as exporters of services and innovators.



Turkey's Islamists challenge establishment

By Dilep Hilo

THE TAKE-over by Turkish Islamists of town halls in Istanbul and Ankara in March has shaken the country's secular political and military elite. To its consternation, Western commentators have started bracketing Turkey with Egypt and Algeria, where the fast rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism seems unstoppable.

The cause for concern is real. Having more than doubled its popular vote, from 9 per cent to 19, the Islamic Refah (Welfare) party has caught up with the leading secular True Path (21.5 per cent) and Motherland (21 per cent) parties. Besides capturing Turkey's most populous cities, it gained power in 24 other urban centres scattered throughout the republic. A variety of factors — national and regional, historic and contemporary — lie behind the surge of Islamic forces in Turkey.

Perceived corruption

All major secular parties are seen as corrupt by a rising proportion of the electorate, those exercising power at the national level — the True Path led by Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, and the Social Democrats all the more so. The fact that these parties and the opposition Motherland together lost 14 per cent of the vote illustrates electors' disenchantment. In contrast, Refah is widely perceived as not only honest but also efficient. The exemplary manner in which it has administered Konya, the seventh biggest city with a population of over half a million, since 1989 is a case in point. Another factor which helped Refah was the boycott of the poll by the Kurdish-backed Democratic Party. Refah came to be regarded by many alienated Kurds as the only alternative left.

Unlike Marxism or liberal democracy, Kemalist secularism, the ideology of the Turkish republic since its founding in 1923, is not an all-encompassing creed that explains society and history. Nor is it a social and ethical system in the form of a conventional religion. Its ascendancy over the past seven decades has left Turkish society without the ethical moorings which in the past were provided by Islam. Its main achievement was to foster Turkish nationalism. But, with Turkey well established as a nation, has Kemalism lost its raison d'être?

It has certainly proved unable to provide guidelines for resolving a host of acute problems facing Turkey today: rampant inflation, staggering interest rates, declining currency, the bloody Kurdish insurgency, rising rural migration to the cities. Refah won strong backing from hundreds of thousands of poor migrants from the Anatolian hinterland who flooded into the shanty-towns of Istanbul and Ankara at the rate of half a million a year. They are shocked by the "decadent" ways of the Westernised middle and upper classes of these cities, and turn to the mosque and to Refah, which promises to arrest this "moral decline". And many other Turks, finding the country mired in worsening economic crisis and ethnic violence, are seeking solace and solutions in Islam.

Boosted by the military

Of the four major constituents of the secular establishment — the armed forces, the mainstream political parties, business and the media — the most powerful is the military. Since World War II it has carried out coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980.

Since the generals' overriding objective in September 1980 was to rid society of Marxist ideology and parties, they encouraged Islamic ideas and education as an antidote. In 1982 the military government made compulsory the teaching of Islam in schools, something that had been optional since 1967. It was for instance, during military rule, which lasted until December 1983, that the Higher Institute of Islamic Studies, established in 1959, was upgraded to the Faculty of Divinity of Marmara University, with a student body of 1,200. Islamic programmes were introduced on the state-run radio and television. This

is precisely what President Sadat did in Egypt soon after taking office in 1970. He encouraged the revival of the Islamic forces, principally the Muslim Brotherhood, to counter the left. In the event, he fell victim to Islamic militancy. In Turkey, by the mid-1980s there was much ferment among Islamist intellectuals, they concentrated on producing journals and pamphlets, and convening small meetings. To them it seemed only a matter of time before those activities spilled over into the political arena. "Once Islamist intellectuals are integrated into the political thinking of Turkey, then the situation will change," Seyfettin Manisaliç, a sociologist at Istanbul University, told me in mid-1986. In the light of the current political situation, this was a prophetic statement indeed.

'Turkey's social and economic elite is deeply troubled'

With its energies focused on countering the Kurdish insurgency, the Turkish officer corps, a staunch supporter of Kemalist secularism, is unlikely to clash with the Islamic forces now, especially when Refah seems determined to operate within constitutional limits and stick to its strategy of acquiring state power through the ballot box. With at least four strong parties, Turkey is a country of coalition governments; once a party flirts with 20 per cent of the vote, it enters the arena of power-sharing. This is what Refah achieved in March — chiefly at the expense of the fast dwindling Social Democrats, junior partners in the ruling coalition.

Troubled elite

Turkey's social and economic elite is deeply troubled. It views Islamists as anti-

business, committed to taking Turkey away from its pro-Western orientation manifested inter alia in the country's membership of NATO and associate membership of the European Union (EU). Over half of Turkey's exports are to the EU.

Business leaders are pressuring the hierarchies of the two right-of-centre parties — the opposition Motherland (headed by Mesut Yilmaz) and the ruling True Path — to merge. Were this to happen, the new body would have the backing of over 40 per cent of the electorate, an impressive figure. But, with the Social Democrats in apparently terminal decline, the status of chief opposition party will pass to Refah. This will enhance its power to set the political agenda and polarise society into two hostile camps, secular and Islamist.

The basic problem facing the secular establishment is twofold: lack of a viable ideology, and absence of political leadership that can meet the challenges thrown up by the end of the cold war and the rise of Islamic militancy. On the eve of the local elections, True Path leader Suleyman Demirel, said that should the two ruling parties together fail to get 40 per cent of the vote, they should seek a fresh mandate from the electorate. They got only 33 per cent. The argument that Ciller has ample time to curb the Kurdish insurgency as well as runaway inflation and economic recession before the next general election in October 1996 sounds hollow. The five-year tenure of the Kurdish parliament is not mandatory. Previous general elections have been held every four years, the last one in October 1991. So the next parliamentary election is more likely to be in the autumn of 1995, or even earlier.

Meanwhile, Refah leaders will concentrate on improving public services and curbing corruption in town halls, as well as restraining party militants, to win wider support at the next general elections. Its outcome may determine whether or not the days of secular Turkey are numbered.

Middle East International

Losers and bad losers

By G.H. Jansen

POPULAR jubilation over the entry of Palestinian policemen into the two "liberated" bantustans of Gaza and Jericho has concealed two factors that have grave implications for the future of the peace process.

The first of these factors is that the area liberated is minuscule. The two bantustans together amount to six per cent of the occupied territory of Gaza and the West Bank (Gaza and the West Bank together comprise only 19 per cent of pre-Israel Palestine). The Jericho enclave of 62 square kilometres is only one per cent of the West Bank.

The implication is this: If Israel leaves these pocket handkerchiefs of territory with so much difficulty and so slowly what will happen when it comes to vacating the remaining 94 per cent of the occupied territory. Of course, the settlements have by now swallowed up 50 per cent of occupied territory and, according to the Oslo accord which Arafat should never have accepted, these settlements are not to be removed.

The second factor is the mean-spirited grudging manner in which the Israelis left. The first batches of Palestinian policemen were, deliberately,

kept waiting at crossing points for four or five days. The Israelis tried to conceal as much as possible what they saw as the humiliating spectacle of Israelis having to abandon their conquests, with the Israeli flag being lowered and so forth. So the policemen were finally allowed to enter only in the small hours of the morning when people were not expected to be around. But in this case they made a point of being around. The formal handing over ceremony was also set for an inconvenient hour. And few journalists and mediemen were permitted into Jericho. After the journalists objected to the supreme court, ten of them were allowed. The implication is this: The Israelis are implementing the agreement with such bad grace that at the end of it there will be more ill will and anger than before, instead of the opposite.

This is in glaring contrast to the correct behaviour of the white South African government at the recent change of regime there. At Nelson Mandela's inauguration he was presented with a full ceremonial all-white guard of honour and the all-white air force laid on a ceremonial fly-past. Do the Israelis have to show the world that they are worse even than the South African boers?

Rebel capital a haven of peace in war zone

By Michelle Faul
The Associated Press

HUAMBO, Angola — Eighty kilometres from the clash of combat, shouting kids play a spirited soccer game, women pound corn for supper and a man whistles tunelessly as he sweeps a street devastated by jet bombers a year ago.

A year ago Huambo was the worst battlefield in Angola's 19-year war, now it is the headquarters of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels.

Mr. Savimbi and his 50,000-strong rebel army, out to take over one of Africa's potentially richest countries, no longer huddle in the bush or hide in this southern African nation's badlands. Headquarters is in this city of tree-lined boulevards and pastel-painted cottages, where the rebels raised their black rooster banner after a stunning defeat of government troops in a three-month battle.

Huambo is a city of older people, women and thousands of children. Teen-age girls strolled the streets with babies on their hips. "All our men are fighting at the front," they said.

For now, only a handful of armed fighters are visible. But "murders" and interpreters of UNITA, always accompanied a half dozen international reporters the rebels invited into their territory.

"Huambo is an island of tranquility," said Jeronimo Elavoko Wanga, rebel-appointed governor of central Huambo province. "Of course, if the Luanda government decides to bomb us again, there's nothing we could do."

UNITA estimates at least 10,000 of the city's 400,000 residents were killed during the street-to-street gun battles and government air raids that rocked Huambo.

The city became a prize for both sides after Mr. Savimbi dashed a 1991 peace treaty by accusing the government of rigging his defeat in Angola's first elections in September 1992. Mr. Savimbi fortified a mansion, pulled his troops from the unified army, and called Huambo, where his Ovimbundu people reside, his own.

Fighting broke out throughout the country a month later, and in January, 1993, when war-weary Angola should have been inaugurating its first democratically-elected president, the battle for Huambo began.

The facade of Mr. Savimbi's two-story mansion, what the locals call the White House, shows mangled girders and parts of the bombed-out roof collapsed on a circular staircase.

The guerrillas have set up a basic administration in Huambo.

"We've reopened schools, got the city cleaned up, but we have to pay teachers and sweepers," Mr. Wanga said. "You know, this is a new

experience for us because all our fighters are volunteers." Fabio Alveiro, sweeping papers and leaves on Oct. 5 Boulevard, said he was paid. "It's not enough to survive, but better than nothing at all," he said. His month's work gets him 5 kilograms of corn meal and a chicken.

But thanks to U.N. relief supplies, no one is dying of hunger in the city as they are elsewhere in the country.

Eight plane loads of food fly to Huambo every day in an airlift begun in January by the Red Cross after Mr. Savimbi and President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos agreed to allow aid into enemy territory.

"A huge humanitarian disaster was averted, but disaster always can strike again if the aid is cut," said Philippe Lazzarini, in charge of Red Cross operations in the 75 per cent of Angola controlled by UNITA.

Mr. Wanga said 60 to 70 per cent of the corn crop, a staple that is cooked into a thick porridge, was lost. Nevertheless, Huambo municipal market on a recent visit boasted goat meat, live chickens, beans, sweet potatoes, guavas, avocado pears, roasted peanuts and even popcorn.

Country people are out so fortunate. "There's no medicine for the kids," said Victoria Nanjini of Kunbinga, 100 miles northeast of Huambo. She pointed to children with infected eyes huzzing with flies, with hacking coughs and torn T-shirts giving little protection against a biting dawn cold.

The United Nations estimates that 3 million Angolans — a third of the nation — are endangered by a famine that could become as devastating as Somalia's.

But the UNITA brass, like the government officials they often call corrupt, lacks little. Despite a fuel embargo imposed by the United Nations in September, chartered aircraft fly nightly from Kinshasa, Zaire, to dirt strips in rebel territory with fuel and other goods.

"When will there be peace?" Ms. Nanjini asked a reporter hopelessly.

The 30-year-old mother of five was 10 years old in 1975 when factions that had fought Portuguese colonisers for independence turned on each other as the Europeans abandoned Angola.

At least a half million Angolans and probably more have died since a remote African conflict became a proxy cold war battle. Cuban and Russian troops fought for Dos Santos and South African soldiers helped Mr. Savimbi, who was armed by the United States.

Today, UNITA and the government fight it out alone. Mr. Dos Santos controls isolated provincial towns surrounded by UNITA forces and a narrow strip along the Atlantic Ocean, including Luanda, the capital.

Features

Israel ready to discuss expanded self-rule

(Continued from page 1)

sisters and brothers for 30 years," said Lieutenant Abu Ala. He cried as he kissed and held his elderly mother. His sister said her sons had never met their uncle.

Dozens of anxious families came to Jericho on Saturday from other parts of the West Bank in search of sons, brothers and relatives who may have arrived with the police on Friday.

They crowded in front of the military headquarters asking to see their relatives.

Women ululated and cried tears of joy as they hugged and kissed their sons.

"I used to tell them about him and show them his pictures," one said.

Policeman Mousa Abdullah, a member of Al Aqsa Brigade that came from Iraq, sat under a tree with his mother, father, sisters and their children.

"This is the first time I see my family in 15 years. I cannot describe my feelings of joy," he said.

His mother Hourieh, 60, wept as she described the family's celebrations on Friday when they heard their son had returned home.

In the Gaza Strip, Israel handed over three more military posts to the Palestinian police force. One was a military base in Jabaliya refugee camp, the birthplace of the Palestinian uprising against Israel in December 1987.

Jericho was officially handed over to Palestinians on Friday when the last Israeli soldiers withdrew from the area. The police were entrusted with guarding institutions and people until a Palestinian interim government takes over.

Major General Haj Ismail, commander of the Jericho forces, convened his first meeting with heads of civil administration departments and instructed them to pursue their duties normally.

"We are trying to organize ourselves and start our duties in serving you all," Gen. Ismail told a crowd waiting outside the headquarters to greet the police force. "You are all part of us, you are our people."

"It is a strange feeling. I have not felt so free for the past 27 years under occupation. It seems like Jericho is remote from the rest of the West Bank," said Jericho resident Bassem Yasser, 48.

Former Palestinian prisoners toured the empty Israeli jail here.

Apart from mounting joint patrols with Israeli border troops outside the town, there was little active duty for the police. And with administrative offices closed, a holiday atmosphere took hold of the town.

"Today we are resting and distributing the new posts," said Major Ahmad Abu Hamid. "We are cleaning up the place and we will be ready for full work in a couple of days."

Essam Mahmoud, a 35-year-old who was jailed here in 1988, toured the prison with other former inmates. "I wanted to see my old cell... I can't believe that now I can enter here without handcuffs," he said.

Another former detainee, 40-year-old Ahmad Umar, pointed to a cell's white-washed walls. "There were all our names on the walls here. Now they're all gone."

"I came here today with feelings of anger at the Israeli injustice and brutality. I wanted to see this old place. I now hope all of Palestine will be liberated."

At the new Palestinian headquarters, the former offices of Israel's military administration, senior police officers met local dignitaries to discuss the details of self-rule and the changes to come.

Police were on alert at the gates after a child killed himself by accident here in the midst of celebrations Friday by firing a gun that happened to be loaded. A woman and an elderly man were also injured in the accident.

A new contingent of 240 policemen, recruited from Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) units in Sudan, marched into the Gaza Strip late Saturday from the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

At 5 a.m. (0200 GMT), the Jabaliya refugees jumped for joy to see that Israeli troops had just pulled out of the base set up in the heart of the camp in 1970 as well as from an administration building in the neighbouring village.

As the sun rose, most of the camp's 75,000 residents and the 25,000 in the village took to the streets to celebrate. A dozen of them scaled the army's 30-metre tower to hoist the Palestinian red-green-white-black flag.

A four-year-old child, seeing a policeman for the first time, took fright and burst into tears. "They're not Jews, they're Palestinian soldiers," his mother reassured him.

As hundreds of people watched from rooftops, women banged on drums and chanted nationalist songs, a policeman in olive-green uniform saluted and hugged another child.

Militants of the Fatah Hawks of PLO leader Yasser Arafat fired off celebratory rounds of gunfire in the air. Even Hamas, the militants who oppose the self-rule deal with Israel, shouted slogans to welcome the police.

"My son didn't give his life for nothing. He died for Palestine, and I'm so happy that they're gone," said Um Iyad Al Ashkar, wearing a pendant with a photograph of her son who was killed by Israeli soldiers in February 1988.

"But my joy will not be complete until all the (Jewish) settlers leave our land and Jerusalem is ours again," she said.

By Julia Rubin
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — (Galeria Ivanova) sprints at Nikita Khrushchev's black and white tombstone as if trying to solve a puzzle.

She knows Khrushchev's dark side: his years as Stalin's henchman, his erratic crack-downs on art and religion, his impulsive and autocratic streak. But for her, he will always be the man who denounced Stalin and began the political "thaw" that enabled her to travel abroad as a young pianist in 1961.

"My generation can say Khrushchev did a lot," said Ivanova, 68. "I had a taste of freedom, a taste of the truth. And that was a beginning. Then 17 long years of dumb stagnation, and then Gorbachev."

Sunday was the 100th anniversary of Khrushchev's birth, and Russians are divided over how to remember him.

Was he a real reformer? And in this period of faltering reform, does that mean he should be thanked or blamed?

Newspapers have reprinted some of Khrushchev's speeches and published interviews with family members. Celebrations are being held in Kalinovka, his native village.

In Moscow, there are rival conferences that reflect some of the disagreements about Khrushchev. One is sponsored by Mikhail Gorbachev's Foundation, the other by former associates of Gorbachev.

For many Russians,

Russia remembers Khrushchev

Khrushchev and Gorbachev are inextricably linked.

It was Gorbachev, intent on his own reforms, who as the last Soviet leader resurrected Khrushchev's name from official disgrace with a glancing but favourable reference in a 1987 speech. To him, Khrushchev represented the possibility of reforming Soviet Communism.

Khrushchev was an ambiguous model. He served a brutal dictator, then dramatically debunked him in a "secret speech" to party members in 1956. He loosened the regime's grip and granted some freedoms, but left the basic structure of the absolutist state.

He opened the doors of the gulag to thousands of prisoners, letting them rejoin their families. But he continued to repress dissidents, committing some to psychiatric institutions.

He allowed the publication of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," but let Boris Pasternak be persecuted for "Doctor Zhivago."

In 1964, he was ousted and sent into humiliating retirement, where he wrote memoirs that were smuggled to the West.

Even at the peak of his political powers, Khrushchev was ridiculed as a bumpkin who banged his shoe on the table at the United Nations and ordered crops planted in regions not suited to them.

"We told jokes about him, of course," said Ivanova. "But so what? What he accomplished was worth much more than his mistakes."

Khrushchev's reputation soared in the early days of perestroika.

"There was a kind of peak in 1988 or 1989, when there was still hope for a reformed Communism," said William Taubman, a history professor at Amherst college who is writing a book on Khrushchev. "Then so many people moved beyond that idea, and he faded from view."

The reform movement also overtook Gorbachev, leading to the demise of the party and Soviet Union.

Gorbachev, still unpopular in Russia, told reporters last week that Khrushchev was an inconsistent and limited reformer, but sincere and courageous.

Yegor Yakovlev, who edited the pro-perestroika Moscow News during Gorbachev's heyday, also said Khrushchev had been underappreciated.

"Khrushchev's figure looks smaller than what he achieved," said Yakovlev, who helped organise one of the conferences. "He freed the country from the icy cold of Stalin's epoch. It's one falling stone that brings the avalanche."

But historian Yuri Afanasyev, who led efforts to debunk Soviet history during Gorbachev's regime, said he would not attend that conference because he disagreed with such "whitewashing" of Khrushchev.

"Khrushchev was a creature of the Stalinist system, a convinced bolshevik," Afanasyev said. "He couldn't separate himself from it and he couldn't give it up. He himself said, 'my hands are

soaked in blood."

"Khrushchev was no idiot. He was wise. After Stalin's death, he saw the signs of catastrophe — that this intolerable regime could not continue. And his reaction was entirely natural. He acted to avert crisis. And Gorbachev did the same thing."

Another prominent historian, 87-year-old Dmitry Likhachev, feels even more strongly.

"I can't say anything good about the man," he said of Khrushchev. "He was a model primitive. The most terrible of his crimes was destroying several thousand churches."

"A lot of newspapers are trying to make him look better than he actually was."

In some minds, Khrushchev and Gorbachev share the blame for Russia's current political and economic straits.

"A lot of people say Khrushchev was a great reformer, but I think he led to Gorbachev, and during Gorbachev everything collapsed," said Andrei Pugachev, a 20-year-old political science student who mourns the death of the Soviet Union.

Or as the headline Pravda wrote this week, Khrushchev failed as a policymaker because he was always in a hurry. "Perestroika," it added, "Also was begun in haste," along with President Boris Yeltsin's "shock therapy" and Russia's new constitution.

"Where are we burying to?" Pravda huffed.

The uncertainty about Khrushchev extends even to



"Khrushchev was an ambiguous man. He served a brutal dictator, then dramatically debunked him in a 'secret speech' to party members in 1956. He loosened the regime's grip and granted some freedoms, but left the basic structure of the absolutist state."

his birthday. Officially, it has been commemorated on April 17, but his grandson said last week that a birth certificate shows it as April 15.

Taubman feels Khrushchev is significant to historians as a window on the Soviet power structure. "His life parallels that of the Soviet system and he played all the roles: peasant, worker, party official on up," Taubman said.

Recent findings in Soviet archives show Khrushchev as more forceful in foreign policy than was thought, the

American Historian said, taking such major decisions as Soviet policy during the Cuban missile crisis by himself.

Russia, his impact remains greatest on the 1960s generation.

As Ivanova expressed it: "Society doesn't think about him. Young people have so much else to think about. But those of us who lived in those times with him, we understand that what he did in 1956 was an achievement, a psychological break from the past."

waiting up to 30 years before receiving news of their families.

"I used to send my letters to an uncle in Mexico and he would forward them to Spain," Mr. Fuenturbel said.

"It was in 1947 that I received my first letter from home. They had just put my name on the envelope and 'Russia' but I got it," he grinned.

In the postwar years, some intrepid souls did make it home to Spain, after a tortuous journey via Mexico and Cuba.

Others started to return when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev let the first rays of democracy into Soviet society with his policy of "perestroika" in the 1980s. About 900 Spaniards remain in Russia, some because they have no home to return to and others because they do not wish to be uprooted yet again.

Having witnessed the anguish of his 33 residents, Mr. Miro believes that possibly the best solution is to send money, food and supplies to those in Russia to enable them to live well, rather than encouraging another painful break.

"The story of the ninos de guerra is a tale of pain and suffering," he said.

By Clar Ni Chonghaile
Reuters

ALALPARDO, Spain — Ramoncin was one of thousands of Spanish children evacuated to the Soviet Union to escape the civil war in the 1930s.

Fifty-six years later, he finally came home.

Now the big, silent man from Asturias cares for the dogs at the "return residence," the country's first home for the former "ninios de guerra" (children of war).

But the homecoming has no fairy-tale ending.

Those who fled the bombs and fighting as children are now elderly men and women who have left behind family and friends in Russia to return to a land they hardly recognise.

About 8,000 children, aged between five and 12, were evacuated from Spain between 1936 and 1939.

Half ended up in the Soviet Union, guests of dictator Josef Stalin who supported the cause of the Spanish Republicans against Fascist General Francisco Franco.

The children who boarded the cargo ships for Leningrad (St. Petersburg) little thought that, for many, it would be almost a lifetime before they came home.

Spain's forgotten war children tell tale of pain and suffering

"They could not return because Stalin, who had set up a left-wing dictatorship in Russia, did not want to hand them over to Franco," said Victor Miro who runs the home.

Franco, victorious in the war, refused to let the "children of Communists" into Spain.

"There were two extremes and in the middle of the two were the poor children," Mr. Miro said sadly.

The tired-looking administrator was 13 when the civil war broke out and always wanted to do something for the forgotten evacuees. When he inherited some money, he set up the Gumieli Foundation to provide homes and support for them.

With the help of government money, the home was built.

The tidy building on the outskirts of the quiet village of Alalparido is home to 33 Spaniards who returned last year.

A combination of World

War II, government intransigence and new ties prevented them making the move earlier.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union left many nearly destitute and persuaded them to seek a better life in Spain.

"Women's shoes cost four million coupons now and a pension is only worth 300,000 coupons per month," said Mr. Miro.

The residents have received no pension from Russia since 1992 and are subsidised by the Spanish government.

"Some of our most recent arrivals told me how they spent all day in queues outside bread shops. When the day's meagre supply had been doled out to the first 28 or so people, the queue moved forward to wait for the next day's supply," Mr. Miro said.

During a recent visit to Spain, President Boris Yeltsin signed an accord aimed at ending the confusion on pen-

sions.

Russia will pay a basic pension to Spaniards, regardless of where they live at the time of retirement and Spain will top this up to bring it into line with pension payments here.

Money is only one of the Ninos' problems.

"These children were cut off from their families at the age of seven or eight. Now they have had to leave their grandchildren and nephews and nieces behind," Mr. Miro said.

"You see them coming out of the telephone booths, tears streaming down their faces after speaking to their families."

In the 1930s, the children were welcomed to Russia with open arms. Bands played as the ships drew into Leningrad, they were cared for in special homes, and educated in Spanish.

"They gave us everything and treated us better than their own children," said Luis Fuenturbel who was evacuated from the coastal town of

Bilbao when he was 10.

World War II shattered the harmony. Many of the older children joined the Soviet army to fight against the Nazis.

"A third died during this time. Some in the army, some in the bombings and some from hunger," said Mr. Miro.

"About 150 were given military training and sent to fight in Stalingrad. After a few days, only three were left," he said.

After the war, there was little chance of leaving.

"We could not come because they would not let us go. They wouldn't let a fly out of the country," said Mr. Fuenturbel.

"If we had been allowed out in 1954 when the war ended, we would all have gone because we were always thinking of our families and Spain," he added.

The refusal to let them leave was accompanied by a breakdown in communication, with some evacuees

waiting up to 30 years before receiving news of their families.

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NEW HORIZONS IN COMFORT

Commodity prices soar as speculators move in

LONDON (R) — Waves of speculative money cascaded into commodity markets, from copper to coffee, sending some prices Friday to their highest since the late 1980s.

"I've not seen anything like this for years. They've all broken out on the upside now," one senior trader of industrial metals said.

On the London Metal Exchange (LME), copper hit a 14-month high, nickel was at a 15-month peak, aluminium reached its highest in nearly two years, while lead and zinc were at three-month highs.

December said copper's rise was driven by demand in the United States — had convinced speculators and investment funds to put their money into base metals.

"What is happening is that the others are catching copper up... it could be the start of a major move up, and nobody

wants to miss it," said one dealer.

Analysts said this time the fundamentals of supply and demand — stocks of many metals are still at record highs — are largely being ignored.

"The others have been pulled up by copper, with the exception of nickel where the short-term fundamentals do justify this, Angus MacMillan of LME brokers Billiton-Enthoven Metals said.

"Forget fundamentals. If an export train is coming at you, you either get out of the way or go along for the ride. Nobody should be short when the markets are like this," another trader said.

Copper stocks have fallen for most of the year, with demand from around the world sucking metal from LME warehouses. Stocks now stand at one-year lows of 424,700 tonnes, or 31 per cent down from February's 16-year highs.

Greece will free all restrictions on capital movements tomorrow

ATHENS (R) — Greece will free all restrictions on capital movements from Monday, hoping to stop a wave of heavy speculation against the drachma, National Economy Minister Yannis Papadonou told reporters Saturday.

He said "unsubstantiated and unreal rumours" about a drachma devaluation had sparked a run on the currency ahead of July 1, when Greece's final capital restrictions were to be lifted.

"For that reason the government has decided to proceed to the immediate freeing of short-term capital movements from May 16," he said.

In compliance with European Union agreements, Greece had removed most of its restrictions on changing foreign currencies. The exception was on transactions of

under three months and all these will now disappear Monday.

The advancing of the date for allowing Greeks and foreigners to buy and sell drachmas whenever they want would "thwart the expectations of speculators," in their attacks on the drachma, he said.

Aside from measures which imposed new reserve requirements on Friday, Greece would count on support for the drachma from the "positive direction of the current account and inflation," Mr. Papadonou said.

Inflation has fallen from almost 23 per cent in December 1993 to 10.4 per cent annually in April this year. It is still almost three times the European Union average.

The Greek central bank has spent between \$500 million

Japanese rush to buy cheap Asian clothes as recession bites

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese consumers, once obsessed with expensive European designer labels, are now rushing to buy cheap Asian clothes as the country's longest post-war recession drags on, a new survey shows.

The survey of imported clothing, conducted by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) between October and December, finds that Italian, French and British designers are still the best-selling brands for most products.

But for some other products — such as men's blouses and women's fur coats — Hong Kong designers were the most popular, outstripping such famous brand names as Ermenegildo Zegna and Christian Dior.

A big finding of the survey of major trends and best-selling products in 1993 was the "low-priced imports, particularly those from Asia, generally sold well," JETRO said.

"Price reductions of more expensive American and European imports did not stimulate sales at the level expected."

Despite the sluggish Japanese consumer market, overall imports of clothing performed well compared with domestic products.

JETRO cited "the ongoing shift of domestic manufacturing to offshore production, improvements in the quality of products from China and other parts of Asia, increased product variety and the achievement of low prices and good quality."

"The price of expensive European and American brands conversely fell by around 20 per cent in the wake of the move to return the benefits of the strong yen to the market. Domestic and offshore price differentials were only reduced in limited cases, however, and did not result in the degree of revitalisation consumption that was originally intended," the agency said.

JETRO also noted that efforts by Japanese importers to improve quality and stabilise

Oil prices rise 25% in just six weeks

LONDON (R) — World crude oil prices made new gains this week in an explosive rally that has added 25 per cent to the value of the barrel since the end of March.

Some traders wondered Friday how long it could go on — as supply/demand seem balanced rather than tight just now.

But oil looked as if it was caught up in a wave of buying enthusiasm seen across a range of commodities.

"We have hit a change in the commodity cycle — and oil is a commodity," said Peter Gignoux, head of the London energy desk for Smith Barney Shearson.

Mr. Gignoux doubted if any one set of players — such as big investment funds — was alone fuelling a rally which has lifted oil prices out of the bargain basement.

New Delhi opens up lucrative telephone sector to foreign companies

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India opened up basic telephone services to foreign and domestic private companies in a long-awaited telecom policy unveiled Friday, taking the first step towards private phone networks.

The policy is aimed at meeting an \$8 billion shortfall in the nearly \$14 billion required to modernise India's antiquated telephone system and provide a phone on demand to its citizens by the year 1996.

Ordinary Indians with no political influence and no money to pay bribes to jump the queue now have to wait up to five years for a connection, which may not even work when they get it.

Three million people are on the waiting list, which is growing by 15-20 per cent every year, but the list is expected to vanish when foreign companies bring their telecom dollars to provide phone services.

Communications Minister Sakshi Ram told parliament the policy also was aimed at bringing to India all sophisticated phone services available in advanced countries and build a world-class network.

The long-awaited policy document, whose theme is "telecommunications for all," was released on the eve of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's departure for a visit to the United States.

Major U.S. telecom firms such as U.S. West and Motorola have been eagerly waiting to enter the huge Indian market of nearly 900 million people, where basic telephone services have been a government monopoly.

Hardware manufacture and value-added services, such as radio paging and mobile cellular phone systems, have been thrown open.

Malaysia focuses on fighting inflation

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — After seven boom years, Malaysia is now fighting inflationary pressures exacerbated by rising spending and profit-fitting, analysts said Friday.

A marathon effort to fight inflation is underway through a national campaign to be launched by Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad on Thursday, which aims to curb excessive price hikes and get "every Malaysian consumer" to spend less.

The inflation rate of 3.6 per cent last year was considered relatively low, given the country's 8.5 per cent economic growth rate, but analysts said soaring wages, ample liquidity and arbitrary price increases are putting pressure on prices.

Most economists have predicted inflation will rise to 4.2 per cent this year and 4.5 per cent in 1995.

"There is a psychological

trend among our traders that prices of goods must go up every few months regardless of whether there is a genuine rise in inflation," said Ramon Navaratnam, the chief executive of Bank Baruh.

The inflationary trend was reflected by the overall 7.4 per cent hike in prices of non-controlled foodstuffs in the first quarter, compared to the corresponding period last year, said Mr. Navaratnam.

"These price increases are domestically generated and not import-inflated. Therefore, there should have been more countervailing action to stop them," Mr. Navaratnam said.

A precursor of the main anti-inflation campaign was the classification on Wednesday of bread as a controlled item to expand an inventory of essential consumer goods of which the price cannot be raised without government approval.

Analysts said the dynamic growth of the Malaysian economy over the last seven years, at an average rate of eight per cent a year, had led to an estimated 70 to 100 per cent surge in the income of Malaysia's middle and upper classes since 1987.

"The boom had also brought an influx of foreign funds meant for capital and money market investments, officials said.

Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela reach trade agreement

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela reached a final accord Friday on a free trade agreement, the Mexican commerce ministry said.

The accord struck in Bogota between the so-called Group of Three creates a new free-trade bloc in the Americas, following on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and two other deals linking Mexico to Chile and Costa Rica.

"After more than three years... Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela concluded negotiations in Bogota on a free trade agreement of the so-called G-3 after reaching a final accord on technical aspects that emerged during a legal revision of the texts," the commerce ministry said in a statement.

"The (G-3) accord would open a market of 50 million inhabitants, who import more than \$20 billion annually, to Mexico's imports," it said.

The accord goes into effect on Jan. 1, 1995, pending legislative approvals in the three countries.

It would gradually lower tariffs and other trade barriers among the three nations. Like NAFTA, it sets standards for commerce and establishes a dispute-resolution mechanism.

From Jan. 1, barriers would be removed on about 40 per cent of Mexico's exports to Colombia and another set of Colombian trade barriers would be lowered five years later.

Under the deal, Venezuela is required to gradually dismantle its trade barriers over a period of 10 years.

"In the next few days, attorneys and negotiators will conclude... their preparations of the legal text to incorporate the results of the negotiations," the Mexican ministry said.

The presidents of the three countries are scheduled to sign the accord next month.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY MAY 16, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Despite the poor aspect of Moon square Jupiter you have a good opportunity to handle business matters wisely and make advances in your line of endeavor. Follow every rule and regulation that applies.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to gain personal aims easily during the day, but not in the evening when you are not thinking clearly on what needs accomplishing.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You are able to organize your life more intelligently in the morning, but don't make foolish changes later in the day which you could regret later.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Look to good friends for help in furthering your projects during daytime. Handle dull chores in the evening hours.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have a good opportunity now to handle business matters wisely and advance in your line of endeavor. Be optimistic.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Plan how to improve your reputation and show that you are an excellent citizen. Follow the advice given by a financial expert.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Morning is the best time for expansion in career activities.

Follow every rule and regulation that applies to you in whatever endeavor.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be sure to keep your part of any contract you have negotiated with others. Try to have more rapport with your mate tonight so there is harmony.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Try to understand the aims of associates better so that you can coordinate your efforts more gainfully. Be poised for any situation.

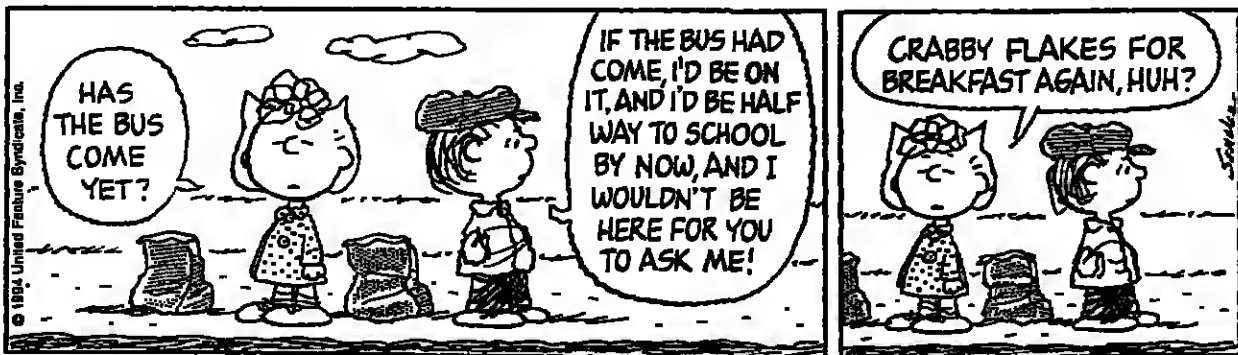
SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have to make some changes if you are to gain your aims at this time. Strive to be more successful with any project.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Engage in familiar activities that could bring you pleasure and profit. Take no risks where your health is concerned.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Try to cooperate with ideas of family members. Make your home more comfortable. Avoid one who gossips and spreads wrong information.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Look to a higher-up for the support you need in a new project you have in mind. This is a good evening for quiet relaxation.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

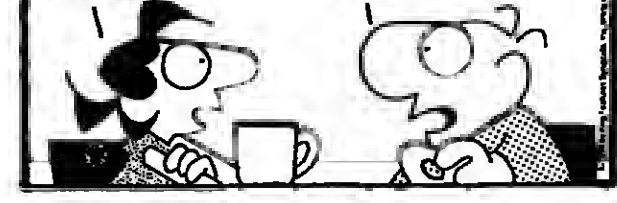


THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

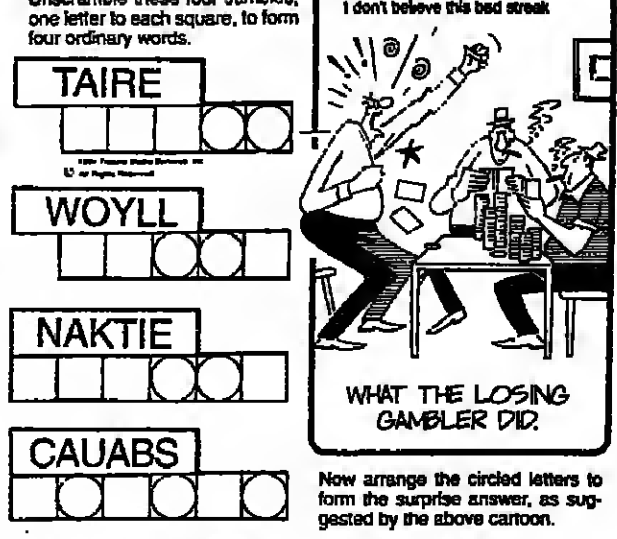
When we were dating, you bought me flowers once a week

Now I waste my money on a mortgage, plumbers, doctors, cars, groceries, heat and taxes! Shame, shame on me!



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer here: HIS

Yesterday's Jumbles: DIRT, JOINT, BEETLE, SALOON

Answer: What the stadium was filled with when the home team won — "TIERS" OF JOY

THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jurgovan

ACROSS

- 1 Unique, abbr.
- 5 Called like a villain
- 10 First name
- 14 Names of film
- 15 Certain Sam
- 16 Gown of India
- 17 Negatives, etc.
- 19 Other
- 20 Wine glasses
- 21 Avoids adversity
- 23 Collection
- 24 Put aside
- 25 Mysterious burnings
- 29 Exceeds in volume
- 32 Signaling, in a way
- 33 Inert mark
- 34 Network letters
- 35 She, in Paris
- 36 Celebrates
- 37 Buy as
- 38 Accelerate the engine
- 39 Reciever
- 40 Played again
- 41 Fellow members
- 42 Developed into
- 44 Entrance
- 45 Red or black
- 46 Cheap
- 48 Setting item
- 51 Presides
- 54 Condemn
- 55 Precipitate
- 58 Precautions
- 59 Difference between a solar and lunar year
- 59 Surrender form
- 60 Some
- 61 Pen

DOWN

- 1 Collections
- 2 Land map
- 3 German river
- 4 Quetade
- 5 Grinders
- 6 Ismic prices
- 7 Gradually decline
- 8 Vene letters
- 9 Ending areas
- 10 Guarantee
- 11 Lighting item
- 12 Cleveland's waterfront
- 13 Presides
- 18 Dollars name
- 22 Area
- 24 More certain
- 25 Vineyard
- 29 Autocrat
- 27 Knite, fork, etc.
- 28 Single
- 29 Made of certain wood
- 30 Angle iron
- 31 Spectacle
- 33 Sponge and crab ends
- 36 Put to death for a belief
- 37 Former gov't. govt.
- 38 God of thunder
- 40 Asian
- 42 Plus in order
- 43 Cope
- 45 Piece
- 46 Mexican dish
- 47 Rugged
- 48 Scheme
- 49 Cheese
- 50 Bog
- 51 Condemn
- 52 Very
- 53 Gov't.

Puzzle Solved:

ACROSS: 1. Unique, abbr. 2. Land map 3. German river 4. Quetade 5. Grinders 6. Ismic prices 7. Gradually decline 8. Vene letters 9. Ending areas 10. Guarantee 11. Lighting item 12. Cleveland's waterfront 13. Presides 18. Dollars name 22. Area 24. More certain 25. Vineyard 29. Autocrat 27. Knite, fork, etc. 28. Single 29. Made of certain wood 30. Angle iron 31. Spectacle 33. Sponge and crab ends 36. Put to death for a belief 37. Former gov't. govt. 38. God of thunder 40. Asian 42. Plus in order 43. Cope 45. Piece 46. Mexican dish 47. Rugged 48. Scheme 49. Cheese 50. Bog 51. Condemn 52. Very 53. Gov't.

'500,000 killed' in Rwanda violence

KIGALI (Agencies) — Aid workers estimated up to half a million people could have died in Rwanda's bloodbath — more than double previous figures — and the killing had not stopped.

The latest estimate was given Friday as the U.N. Security Council grappled with a resolution to authorise a peacekeeping force of 5,500 for Rwanda.

The central African country of eight million people with a history of bitter rivalry between the majority Hutu and the minority Tutsi tribes has been bathed in blood since April 6.

The killing of Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana that day set off massacres blamed largely on his army and Hutu death squads targeting Tutsis and suspected government opponents.

A Tutsi-dominated rebel force simultaneously launched a spirited offensive. Rebels now control half the hilly country and have encircled the capital, which they shelled overnight.

The U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) told Reuters it had no means of verifying the latest figure for the dead.

"Our conservative estimate is that 500,000 people have been killed in Rwanda since the start of all this (fighting)," said a senior aid official who in the past had given a figure of 200,000 dead.

"Kigali authorities said four days ago that 60,000 bodies had been evacuated from the capital and buried in mass graves outside the city. Kigali had 350,000 residents before the massacres began."

"We see no reason for that sort of scale of killings not to be the situation in the rest of the country," said the official who declined to be identified on the grounds that it might hinder his organisation's relief operation.

Aid workers told journalists visiting blood-soaked Kigali the figure was conservative and the true one may never be known.

They spoke a day after bodies of 88 students were found massacred in the southern government-held town of Gikongoro near Butare — the epicentre of Rwanda's latest slaughter.

Morcart Gueye, spokesman for UNAMIR, told Reuters Saturday the U.N. had no means of verifying the latest estimate of up to half a million dead.

"We have no means of verifying that figure. We just do not know and we cannot comment on it," Mr. Gueye said.

The latest estimate was the highest at any time in the bloody history of Rwanda, rocked by ethnic conflict since the 1950s.

Mr. Gueye said rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and government forces ex-

changed heavy artillery fire overnight near Kigali's Kanombe International Airport.

"It (artillery fighting) went on and off during much of the night. Sporadic fighting is still continuing but there has been a lull in the last few minutes," Mr. Gueye added.

Nearly 100 Rwandan nurses, doctors and drivers of the relief organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have been killed in the country's civil war since mid-April, MSF announced Friday.

The killings happened inside refugee camps, hospitals and medical centres.

An MSF team that visited the massacre sites said only 40 civilians out of about 2,800 grouped at the Saint Joseph Centre at Kibongo survived a massacre there on April 15.

The others were killed by exploding grenades, rockets, automatic arms fire or were killed, between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. They were buried in a mass grave under the bishopric's rectory later, the organisation said.

A nurse who had been kidnapped and raped by army troops and beheaded, along with two drivers and a clergyman, was among the victims.

MSF said the killings among its staff were the first since the organisation was created in 1971.

The report came as U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Jose Ayala Lasso

made an impassioned plea Friday for the world to end the "unimaginable human tragedy" in Rwanda.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council reached broad agreement late Friday to send 5,500 troops to Rwanda but the United States will not support the draft resolution until the shape of the mission is defined.

U.S. diplomats said they had no problem with the text on a new peacekeeping force to protect civilians and provide for humanitarian relief supplies.

But they said they would not vote for it until there was agreement on where the troops and their equipment, expected to be flown in to Rwanda in U.S. aircraft, would be stationed. Such an agreement need not be in the text but had to be concluded with U.N. officials before a vote.

The United States wants to begin deployment of the new force in border areas while United Nations plans call for them to take control of the airport in Kigali.

Australia is considering a U.N. request for a contingent of troops as part of the 5,500 strong force that may be sent to Rwanda, officials said in Canberra Saturday.

A decision on the request would probably require the approval of cabinet or at least the prime minister and senior ministers covering defence and foreign affairs.



Two Tutsi children mutilated by machetes in the country's civil war rest in the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) hospital in Kigali (AFP photo)

Sources here say at least 10 Western countries, mostly European, have also been asked to make a contribution along with a number of African countries if the Security Council gives the go-ahead. A Foreign Affairs Depart-

ment spokesman said: "I can confirm that a request has been received from the U.N. in the last few hours, but no decision has been made about it yet. The spokesman was unable to say how many troops would be contributed."

Japan opposition hints at early no-confidence vote

TOKYO (R) — The leader of Japan's main opposition said in an interview published Saturday his party might introduce a motion of no confidence against the minority government soon after the budget is passed.

He said he would not necessarily try to force an immediate dissolution of parliament, but would wait until a new system of electoral districts is introduced.

"I think we will introduce (a no-confidence motion)," Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Yoshi Kono told the influential Asahi Shimbun.

"The reason is that this government has nothing to do with the will of the people, also, it has only 40 per cent of the seats in the lower house."

"Passing the budget is essential from the point of view of the people's livelihood. We must carry on with the budget debate. But whether we introduce a motion of no confidence after it has passed is a separate question."

A motion to topple Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata's government, now just over two weeks old, would be a major step in the LDP's campaign to grab back power from the

coalition that displaced it last summer from nearly four decades of unbroken rule.

If the chamber passed a no-confidence vote, Mr. Hata would face two choices — to call snap general elections or resign.

The crucial issue is timing. The LDP and other opposition parties have agreed to help pass the long-overdue national budget for the fiscal year that started on April 1. It is now expected to pass by the time the current parliamentary session closes at the end of June.

An election soon after that would be likely to benefit the LDP and the Socialists — the largest and second largest opposition parties — as it would take place under Japan's current electoral system.

Political reform bills passed in January changed Japan's electoral system from the current medium-sized districts, with several representatives each, to a mixture of smaller one-member constituencies and proportional representation.

The new system will reduce the need for the lavish campaign spending seen as the root cause of rampant political corruption.

Clinton taps Judge Stephen Breyer for Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton nominated Federal Judge Stephen Breyer to the U.S. Supreme Court Friday, choosing a renowned jurist with bipartisan backing over two old friends who might have stirred controversy.

"Without dispute, he (Breyer) is one of the outstanding jurists of our age. He has a clear grasp of the law, a boundless respect for the constitution... searching and restless intellect," Mr. Clinton said in announcing his choice.

Speaking to reporters in Boston shortly after Mr. Clinton's White House Rose Garden statement, Judge Breyer said: "I believe very deeply... in the constitution, the laws of the United States and the way in which they touch the lives of ordinary people."

If confirmed by the Senate — almost a foregone conclusion, judging from Republican and Democratic applause for the nomination — the 55-year-old jurist would succeed retiring Justice Harry Blackmun on the nine-member court that defines the basic rights and restrictions of American life.

In choosing Judge Breyer, runner-up to Ruth Bader Ginsburg when Mr. Clinton made his first Supreme Court nomination last year, the Democratic president bypassed Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Arkansas Judge Richard Arnold, both longtime friends and allies.

Mr. Clinton said he "couldn't bear to lose" Mr. Babbitt from his cabinet, and was concerned about Judge Arnold's health. The Little Rock lawyer has suffered for years from a non-fatal form of cancer, and White House officials said he would be undergoing further treatment for the disease.

Although Mr. Clinton insisted either Mr. Babbitt or Mr. Arnold would have been approved by the Senate, both had political or personal drawbacks that might have provoked a confirmation fight — the last thing the president wants, given his push for health care reform.

Indicating that Judge Breyer was the safer political choice, Senate Republican leader Bob Dole called him "top notch" and Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he would sail through the Senate.

Judge Breyer served as the panel's chief counsel before he was named to the federal bench by President Jimmy Carter, and it will conduct hearings on his confirmation.

"Everybody on the Judiciary Committee knows Judge Breyer well... He's a fine man, he's very honest, he's compassionate, he's got a big heart... and I think he'll make a wonderful addition to the Supreme Court," Sen. Hatch said.

The only discordant note came from Democratic Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, but even he conceded that Judge Breyer was a shoo-in for the court.

"I think he'll be confirmed, but some of his writings about small business, and the need to protect small business, or his failure to see the need to protect small business, give me cause for concern," Sen. Metzenbaum said.

Judge Breyer was a professor of antitrust, administrative law and economic regulation at Harvard Law School for 10 years, and also taught for much of the same time at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

China frees top 2 dissidents of 1989 protests

BEIJING (R) — China Saturday announced it had freed the second of two "black hands" behind the 1989 Tiananmen protests in a move diplomats said could both save U.S. trade privileges and put political ghosts to rest.

Chen Ziming, a 41-year-old intellectual sentenced to 13 years in prison for counter-revolution in 1991, was paroled for medical treatment late Friday, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

His family said Mr. Chen was weak but in good spirits and had been sent to receive medical care outside of Beijing with his wife for about 20 days — until after the fifth anniversary of the bloody crackdown around Tiananmen Square on June 4.

"They originally wanted to send them abroad, but Mr. Chen said he wanted to stay in China," his sister, Chen Zihua, said by telephone. "He was positive, but you could see he was tired."

Mr. Chen's release follows the April 23 parole of fellow "black hand" Wang Jintao, who was sent immediately to the United States for medical treatment.

Diplomats said that by releasing both men, Beijing was making a clear effort to meet U.S. concerns on human rights, a pivotal factor as President Bill Clinton makes his decision in coming weeks on extending China's most favoured nation (MFN) trade status.

While China rejects the link between trade and rights, it has been warned repeatedly by U.S. officials it may lose preferential access to its largest market unless concessions are made.

The release also appeared to part of a move to put to rest some of the last remaining ghosts from the Tiananmen tragedy, an incident China's President Jiang Zemin said Thursday was "a bad thing turned good."

Mr. Jiang's comments, a rare direct reference to the army's killing of unarmed protesters in 1989, said Beijing's quick action then had saved the country from chaos and prepared it for the remarkable economic leap it has recorded since then.

"As a result, our reform and opening programme has forged ahead with steadier, better and even quicker steps, and our advantages have been brought into fuller play," Mr. Jiang told visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Muslims gain ground in Bosnia fighting

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Fighting between Muslim and Serb forces around the northern Bosnian Muslim enclave of Tuzla is intensifying and Muslim troops have gained ground, U.N. sources said Saturday.

U.N. peacekeeping spokesman Captain Jens Kirk reported "rather hectic" tank and artillery duels around Vares Friday which forced U.N. military observers to take shelter five times in as many hours.

In Tuzla, a U.N. source who declined to be identified said Muslim fighters had captured a strategic hill and seven villages from the Serbs near Ribnica Wednesday.

"It appears they have taken a chunk north of Ribnica, we are talking about several kilometres," he said.

The Bosnian Serb army (BSA) used the Vjenac hilltop as an artillery platform to shell the town of Tuzla and other surrounding Muslim targets.

The sources said the hill was the highest in the Mount Ozren range which is mostly in Serb hands and its capture was an unusual success for the Muslim forces who can rarely match Serb firepower.

The loss of the hill was not confirmed by the BSA but its command said Muslims were also attacking around Doboj and Teslic further to the west and around Olovto to the south.

The Muslim-led Bosnian government is keeping the 25-month war in the former

Yugoslav republic ticking over with attacks on the Serbs despite intensifying international efforts to halt the fighting.

Foreign minister from the West and Russia, adopting a joint strategy for the first time, told the rivals in Geneva Friday to accept a four-month ceasefire and start negotiating within the next two weeks.

The ministers, including U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russia's Andrei Kozyrev, endorsed an existing peace plan giving Bosnia's Serb 49 per cent of the country with Muslims and Croats taking 51 per cent.

Serbs, who control 70 per cent of Bosnia, want a lasting truce and Muslims only a limited one, fearing an extended period of time would only cement Serb gains.

Bosnian Serb leaders have rejected claims by the new Muslim-Croat Federation to 58 per cent.

They have in the past offered to make concessions while stressing it would be difficult to persuade the Bosnian Serb population to agree to any return of land.

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said the plan presented by seven foreign ministers Friday lacked mechanisms to force Bosnian Serbs to negotiate in good faith and relinquish territory.

He said the plan, which envisages Bosnian Serbs retaining 49 per cent of Bosnian

territory with Muslims and Croats sharing the remaining 51 per cent between them, should be backed up by an international threat of force.

Mr. Christopher denied the suggestion Saturday saying: "We'll be working very hard to achieve a reasonable basis of settlement for both the parties but particularly I think we feel a special responsibility to the Bosnian side to try to assist them in achieving a reasonable relationship."

U.N. peacekeepers said they were looking for two foreign aid workers, believed to be from Sarajevo, who went missing West of Sarajevo and have not been heard of since Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Bosnian Muslim government and Bosnian Croat representatives Saturday marked their agreement to set up a federation in Bosnia-Herzegovina with a ceremony in the presence, Mr. Christopher.

Also present at the ceremony in the U.S. embassy in Geneva, and representing the government in Zagreb, was the Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic.

Mr. Christopher said the federation agreement, which has been negotiated step-by-step over the last two months in Bonn, Vienna and Washington under the auspices of special U.S. envoy for ex-Yugoslavia Charles Redman, was "already paying dividends" in terms of peace and humanitarian relief.

New Haiti president aides discuss cabinet

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — Haiti's army-backed provisional president huddled in the national palace with advisors Friday, formulating policy and discussing names of potential ministers for his parish government.

An aide to Emile Jonassaint said the octogenarian Supreme Court judge was deliberating over picking a prime minister and other cabinet positions but was unable to say when any announcement would be made.

"He's going to start to (discuss) the measures he needs to give priority," said Mireille Durocher Bertin, Judge Jonassaint's chief of staff and a lawyer close to the Haitian military.

Several of those mentioned as possible ministerial candidates served under previous military-backed governments.

The United States said it will revoke the visas and freeze the assets of anybody involved with the new regime. Ms. Durocher Bertin's visa has already been revoked.

Haiti's military and a group of renegade lawmakers installed Judge Jonassaint, 81, as president at the country's parliament Wednesday. President Bill Clinton and some senior Haitian political figures denounced the move as illegal and unconstitutional.

The United Nations has given Haiti's military leaders until May 21 to resign or face a tightening of the oil embargo imposed on them in October.

The embargo is designed to force Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras and other members of the army's top brass into allowing the country's ousted president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to return to power. Mr. Aristide was over-

thrown in a bloody military coup two and a half years ago.

Judge Jonassaint's appointees will take over office space vacated by the legitimate ministers in the government of Mr. Aristide's acting Prime Minister Robert Malval. Mr. Malval instructed the ministers not to go to their offices to prevent any incidents, aides said.

The Presidential Guard Corps who provided Mr. Malval with security abandoned the highly respected publisher and his aides after Judge Jonassaint was installed.

In other developments Friday, the United States stopped issuing non-immigrant visas at its consulate in Port-Au-Prince. The embassy closed the non-immigrant visa section, effectively preventing any Haitians not previously holding visas from going to the U.S.

Taiwan not satisfied with China boat probe

TAIPEI (R) — A Taiwanese delegation returned from China Saturday investigating the murders of 24 Taiwanese tourists and questioned again the Chinese probe into the incident.

The semi-official Straits Exchange Foundation, organisers of the delegation, said in a statement that "although mainland Chinese leaders insisted that there would be 'no cover-up', the mainland authorities' handling of the case has been most unsatisfactory."

The foundation said the mainland side rejected requests to examine the autopsy reports and other important documents.

It said the delegation was

not allowed to interview witnesses and four men arrested for their alleged involvement in the arson attack on a pleasure boat in which the tourists and eight mainland Chinese were killed on Qiondao Lake in coastal Zhejiang province on March 31.

The foundation said it raised more than 200 questions but only some of them were answered by the mainland side.

It said it mentioned several major suspicious points, including that probably more than three persons were involved in the actual attack and that some members of the gang were probably not ordinary citizens.

The foundation added that the boat appeared to have been set on fire twice and that there had been tampering with evidence.

China has said the three suspects and their alleged accomplice were motivated by robbery, but Taiwanese intelligence reports have alleged that renegade Chinese soldiers were involved in the murder and arson attack. Beijing has denied this.

This was the first time since the attack that a Taiwanese negotiator with China and crime experts were allowed to visit the mainland to study the Chinese investigation into the incident, which has strained bilateral ties.

N. Korea begins reactor refuelling despite warnings

SEOUL (R) — North Korea has begun a refuelling process in a nuclear reactor without international monitoring, raising fears it might develop nuclear weapons, South Korean officials said Saturday.

"North Korea sent a telex to the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) that it had just begun the refuelling process in its five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The ministry issued a statement warning North Korea that the situation might be pushed to a catastrophe if it completed reloading fuel any IAEA inspection.

Nuclear experts say analysing the age of the spent fuel rods is crucial to finding out how much plutonium, the ingredient for nuclear bombs, Pyongyang might have obtained.

The Vienna-based IAEA, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, believes the eight-year-old reactor, located at North Korea's nuclear complex in Yongbyon, 100 kilometres north of Pyongyang, could hold the key to the Stalinist state's suspect nuclear programme.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said Friday the North Koreans had removed enough spent fuel from a nuclear reactor this week to make as many as five bombs.

"This time we believe they have enough spent fuel that they can make enough plutonium for four or five nuclear bombs," Mr. Perry said in Williamsburg, Virginia.

He said Washington was discussing with South Korea, North Korea and the IAEA possible steps to prevent the fuel taken out of that reactor from being converted to making nuclear bombs.

Mr. Perry told the council that if efforts to inspect the Yongbyon nuclear complex failed, the United States would consider recommending trade sanctions against North Korea.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry urged the North to begin talks immediately with the IAEA to allow it to select and secure for measurements a representative sample of fuel rods from the five-megawatt reactor.

"The government emphasises to North Korea that taking of fuel rod samples and their preservation, as demanded by the IAEA, is crucially important when all fuel rods are replaced and reminds North Korea that it should not drive the matter to a catastrophe by unilaterally replacing the fuel rods," it said.

A senior government official said North Korea did not make it clear whether it had physically replaced fuel rods or had just started preparing for refuelling.

"It will take about two months to complete the refuelling of the reactor and if the North just started the process, the IAEA will still have time to take steps to carry out tests," he said.

A Seoul official questioned Mr. Perry's remarks that the North Koreans had removed enough fuel to make five nuclear bombs.

"That means the North should have almost completed unloading spent fuel from the reactor before actually beginning to discharge fuel," he said.

He said IAEA inspectors were due to visit the reactor as well as a radiochemical laboratory in Yongbyon which has facilities to reprocess spent nuclear fuel into plutonium.

The IAEA, which said earlier this week that removal of the fuel rods without inspectors present would leave it with no option but to call for action from the U.N. Security Council, has said it will send inspectors to North Korea Saturday.

The Security Council has the power to impose sanctions. North Korea, which denies developing nuclear weapons, in March blocked IAEA inspectors from holding tests in the radiochemical laboratory. But it recently agreed to let the IAEA resume inspections to pave the way for a high-level meeting with the United States.

A nuclear expert described the latest development as serious but said the IAEA could still trace the history of spent fuel.

Roseanne Arnold files for divorce, again

LOS ANGELES (R) — Television star Roseanne Arnold filed for divorce Friday from her husband Tom Arnold for the second time in less than a month, citing irreconcilable differences. The filing in Los Angeles Superior Court came a little less than a month since Arnold made an earlier divorce filing, only to announce a few days later that she was attempting a reconciliation with her husband. The first filing, made in the same court on April 18, alleged that Arnold, star of the hit ABC television comedy series Roseanne, was a battered wife.

The papers filed Friday offered no explanation as to why the reconciliation failed. As in her April filing, Arnold, 41, said Friday the couple has been separated since Dec. 6, 1993. Tom Arnold, 35, is the star of Tom, a television series on CBS that has little ratings success. In a sworn declaration filed with her first divorce petition last month, Roseanne Arnold said: "I now realise that I have been a classic battered and abused wife."

News reports at the time of the first filing said Arnold had fired her husband as executive producer of her show, cut up his credit cards and posted security guards outside the couple's office and their home in the exclusive Brentwood section of Los Angeles.

Warholites hold Pittsburgh bash for museum opening

PITTSBURGH (R) — The Andy Warhol Museum Friday night hosted a swank party with many of the pop artist's eccentric friends and well-known celebrities in attendance. The party was a kick-off to a weekend-long celebration honouring the Pittsburgh native, who has come to symbolise "pop culture". Starting Saturday at midnight, the largest single-artist museum in the United States will open its doors and can be viewed free by the public until midnight Sunday night. Bus tours of "Warhol's" birthplace and a street fair Sunday will also be a part of the weekend festivities.

Warhol's well-known passion for celebrities is reflected in one wing of the museum, which displays his posters of Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger, vocalists Grace Jones, Liza Minnelli and author Truman Capote. Actor Dennis Hopper, who came to Pittsburgh for the opening, said his had been a longstanding friendship with the celebrated artist. "My first wife and I threw Andy his first party in Hollywood before he began making his films," said Hopper, now a director in his own right. Other notables who remembered Warhol included his Muse Ultraviolet, a painter and a self-appointed "Warhol groupie," who arrived at the party in a sequined purple dress. "Through Andy, I revealed myself," she said. "A lot of people revealed themselves through Andy. He often comes to me in my dreams."

Friends of Warhol recalled that he was obsessed with fame, money, and with his looks, which he altered through cosmetic surgery and his trademark wig. John Waters, director of the film Fanny, and the current box-office hit Serial Mom, said "I think he was really handsome. He had a great look."

No beef for young German students

LONDON (AFP) — A German company which organises summer language courses for young Germans has asked families putting them up not to serve beef to their guests, a spokesman said Friday. Euro-partner said it feared that parents, worried by the German government's campaign against British beef imports, would refuse to send their children to Britain. Bonn is concerned because bovine spongiform encephalopathy, so-called "mad cow" disease, can be transmitted to man. The majority of cases in cattle have been detected in Britain. Several hundred families who regularly welcome students into their homes in the summer holidays have received a letter to that effect. "There is a lot of media coverage about mad cow disease in Germany at the moment and many people are very nervous about it. There was a real concern that there may be a mass cancellation of bookings, and Euro-partner has to remain competitive," spokeswoman Jennie Parsons said. The German authorities have threatened to take unilateral measures to drastically limit imports of British beef.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. gives PLO \$5m to ease cash crisis

CAIRO (R) — The United States gave \$5 million to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Saturday to ease the organisation's acute cash shortage as it takes control of the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho. The money, pledged to the Palestinian authority which will administer the autonomous Gaza-Jericho areas, was presented to PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath at the U.S. embassy in Cairo. "This money will finance goods and services to be used in the start-up phase, such as police officer salaries, transport of police units to Gaza and Jericho, food, fuel, temporary lodging and apparel," an embassy statement said. The PLO is so short of money that Dr. Shaath said on Thursday he had to use the \$5 million pledge as collateral against an emergency \$60,000 loan from Cairo banks to get the self-rule process moving. An embassy statement said the contribution was part of a total U.S. pledge of \$500 million over five years in support of the PLO-Israel declaration of principles. It has already delivered the first 24 of 200 vehicles offered to the police force, which began deployment in Gaza on Tuesday. Dr. Shaath said on Thursday other foreign donors, including European nations, Japan and Korea, had stepped in at the last minute to save the PLO from financial collapse.

Scotland Yard to probe Somalia theft

LONDON (AFP) — Scotland Yard detectives are to investigate the theft of \$4 million from the United Nations headquarters in Somalia, a police spokeswoman said Saturday. A team from the Yard's international and organised crime squad will fly to the Somali capital, Mogadishu, early next week, said a spokesman. The U.N. called in Scotland Yard after the cash, used to pay the international organisation's staff in the strife-torn African state, where there are few banking facilities, disappeared from a filing cabinet at its main compound in Mogadishu a month ago. The spokeswoman stressed it was not unusual for international agencies to draw upon the expertise of Scotland Yard officers in investigating crime abroad. But, although Scotland Yard detectives would question and possibly fingerprint suspects, they were not authorised to make arrests, she said.

Kazakh premier visits Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Sergei Terchenko arrived here for a three-day visit to discuss ways of implementing economic and trade agreements. Mr. Terchenko, accompanied by a high-level political and economic delegation including the ministers of energy, trade and transportation, was greeted at the airport by Vice President Hassan Habibi. He told reporters that his visit was aimed at boosting bilateral relations and speeding up cooperation in various fields — including air, sea and road transportation. Mr. Habibi said the two countries would discuss implementation of accords already reached during visits to Alma Ata last October by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and to Tehran by the Kazakh leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in November 1992. An official from the Kazakh embassy in Tehran told AFP that his country and Iran would also discuss oil cooperation.

Iran vaccinates millions against polio

NICOSIA (R) — Hundreds of thousands of health workers and volunteers went door to door in Iran on Friday, vaccinating children under five against polio and giving each family a packet of iodised salt. Tehran Radio said Iranian officials say they hope the vaccination, combined with a similar one-day drive four weeks ago, would cover all 10 million Iranian children under five. Health Minister Ali Reza Marandi told the radio preventing measures had lowered the incidence of polio, a viral infection that can lead to paralysis or death, but the oral vaccination campaign was designed to eradicate it from Iran altogether. He said 15 million of Iran's 60 million people suffered from iodine deficiency and the handing out of iodised salt was meant to encourage people to use it instead of normal salt. Iodine deficiency can disrupt normal physical and mental growth. Tehran Radio said more than 300,000 health workers and paramilitary volunteers took part in the vaccination drive across Iran.

European union to establish Jericho office

TUNIS (R) — The European Union has decided to establish an office in Jericho in order to help implement the Palestinian-Israeli peace deal, European Commission Vice-President Manuel Marín said on Friday. "The EU has decided to establish all its technical delegation in Jericho to work with the Palestinian government or authority," Mr. Marín told journalists after signing agreements on aid with Yasser Arafat. "From there, all should be done to make successful this experience of peace in the Middle East, which is, along with the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, the best good news of the end of the century," he said. "We thank the EU for this continuous and permanent help at this historical moment in rebuilding our state," said Mr. Arafat, who was standing beside Mr. Marín. The aid agreements promise 10 million ECUs (\$12 million) for running the Palestinian police force and 1.8 million ECUs (\$2 million) aid for election costs. EU aid to the Palestinians was about 100 million ECUs last year and is expected to total \$300 million ECUs in 1994-1998.

Saudi assure the Philippines of support

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos was assured of Saudi Arabia's continued support for the country's economic goals, a palace statement said on Saturday, quoting visiting Oil Minister Hisham Nazer. Mr. Nazer, who arrived in Manila on Friday for a three-day visit, said Saudi Arabia would like to "cooperate with the Philippine government economically and in all fields." He carried a letter from King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz stating explicitly their support for Manila. The oil minister also said they were pleased with the conclusion of a partnership deal between oil giant Aramco and the Philippine National Oil Company. Aramco won last year a 40 per cent of Philippine National Oil Co's stake in wholly-owned Petron Corp., the country's largest oil refiner.

Britain seeks explanation over Qatar fogging

LONDON (R) — The British Foreign Office said Saturday it was seeking an explanation from Qatar for the fogging in secret of a British citizen this week despite appeals for democracy. "Our ambassador in Qatar, Mr. Patrick Wogan, will be calling on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to seek an explanation," a Foreign Office spokesman said. He said an embassy official had applied for permission to visit Gavin Sherrard-Smith, a 30-year-old computer technician, as soon as possible in prison in Doha. The spokesman said the Foreign Office had not been informed of the fogging either in advance or since the punishment was carried out on Tuesday. The news came on Friday from Sherrard-Smith's father who had received a letter from his son. Mr. Sherrard-Smith wrote to his father: "Got my 50 on Tuesday. All okay. Glad it's over." The lashes were part of a sentence handed down by an Islamic court for selling alcohol to a Qatari man. Mr. Sherrard-Smith, who was arrested last November, was also sentenced to six months in jail and ordered to be deported at the end of his jail term. Qatar allows westerners to drink only at home and strictly controls the sale of alcohol.

Turkish forces kill 15 Kurdish rebels

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish troops killed 15 Kurdish rebels in the southeast on Saturday, officials said. They said 13 Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) members were killed in a district of Sirt. Two were killed in Diyarbakir and Sirtak. Six PKK guerrillas surrendered to police and seven were arrested in various districts of the region. The PKK's fight in Turkey's eastern and southeastern regions has killed more than 11,600 people since the campaign for a separate state began in 1984.

Hariri seeks way to return to work

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri searched on Saturday for a way to end his week-long work stoppage without losing face. Political sources said Mr. Hariri had already decided to go back to work on the basis of a compromise solution to his dispute with President Elias Hrawi and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

But he still wanted to find a face-saving formula for ending the protest, political sources said on Saturday.

The sources said Mr. Hariri wanted simply to end the protest as he began it last Sunday by resuming work without any announcement.

But Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri wanted a reconciliation meeting at the presidential palace followed by an official announcement that Mr. Hariri's controversial strike was over.

As the deadlock lengthened on Saturday Mr. Hariri travelled unexpectedly to Damascus — apparently to discuss the problem with Syrian leaders.

Pro-Hariri sources said the millionaire prime minister might announce a return to work after talks in Damascus, hoping that credit for the solution would go to the Syrians rather than Mr. Berri or Mr. Hrawi.

However, other political sources said the Syrians, who have 35,000 troops in Lebanon and are the country's main power brokers, were upset by Mr. Hariri's sudden decision to stop work last Sunday and have refused so far to intervene directly in the dispute.

The Syrian leaders believed politicians had no right to strike and considered Mr. Hariri's action prejudicial to Lebanon, the sources said.

They were also concerned that the crisis caused a run on the Lebanese pound, forcing the central bank to sell at least \$200 million during the week to hold the local currency steady.

Sources close to Mr. Berri said the protest had backfired into a considerable political setback for Mr. Hariri, who tried and failed to force through his demand for limited cabinet changes.

Mr. Hariri wanted to add four members to the 30-man cabinet and reshuffle some posts.

His aim was to bring in two heavyweight Christian politicians to placate the angry Christian minority whose leaders have accused the Syrian-backed government of bias and discrimination against them since they emerged weakened from the 1975-90 civil war.

Mr. Hariri also wanted to increase the cohesion and efficiency of the cabinet in the response to widespread criticism that his post-war reconstruction programme is going too slowly and producing too few immediately visible results.

However, Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri blocked Mr. Hariri's proposed reshuffle, saying what was needed was sweeping cabinet changes requiring the approval of the president and a parliamentary vote of approval.

King pays

(Continued from page 1)

they would achieve their national aspirations and underlined the importance of Jordanian-Palestinian coordination in the Middle East peace process.

The head of the delegation delivered an address in which he expressed condolences and sympathy over the death of the Queen Mother and commended the leadership of King Hussein and the Hashemite family.

He also expressed the support of his community for the King in his endeavours to achieve peace and settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

A member of the delegation recited a poem lauding the King's leadership and his support for the Palestinian people.

The meeting was attended by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, the King's advisors, Minister of State Adel Inshad and Director of the Palestinian Affairs Department Asem Ghosheh.



CELEBRATIONS MARRED: Palestinian policemen on Saturday carry the coffin of Ammar Al Shawa, a 11-year-old, who was killed accidentally while playing with a gun during Friday's celebrations in Jericho upon the entry of Palestinian policemen into the occupied West Bank town (AFP photo)

Gunmen kill 12 in S. Africa's worst post-election violence

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Gunmen massacred 12 people in Johannesburg's volatile East Rand township of Tokoza, scene of past clashes between rival African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha factions, police said on Saturday.

Police said there was no indication so far of a motive for the killing, the worst single incident of violence since South Africa elected its first black majority government, led by Nelson Mandela's ANC, at the end of April.

Police spokeswoman Captain Janine Smith said 10 youths were killed in a deserted house and two more bodies were found close to the home.

The bodies lay undisturbed for over 17 hours and were discovered during a routine patrol by soldiers of the newly-formed South African National Defence Force.

Troops meanwhile raided three hostels in the area and seized an assortment of weaponry including 15 AK-47 automatic assault rifles and two rocket launchers.

The hostels were residences of Zulu migrant workers, traditional supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who has been appointed minister of home affairs in the new government of national unity, led by the ANC.

In Ulundi, Mr. Buthelezi urged supporters Saturday to make peace with political rivals to underpin democracy and development.

"Go out and break down the barriers that divide you from your political opponents," declared Mr. Buthelezi.

"Go out and spread the word of peace and reconciliation," he told over 2,000 spirited followers at a rally called to celebrate the election triumph of his IFP in its Kwazulu-Natal stronghold.

Mr. Buthelezi said violence would scare off investors and retard development in Kwazulu-Natal where Inkatha and ANC supporters have battled for over a decade.

More than 10,000 people have died and thousands have been left homeless in the turf war which tore communities apart.

"There can be no economic development in the region until we achieve peace. No businessman will want to invest in this region if his life is in danger. No investors will want to build factories if their factories are going to be burned down," Mr. Buthelezi said.

He told youths in particular they would have to overcome hostility in black townships and rural areas.

"We will have to work at political reconciliation if we are to end up with a national will to make democracy work for the benefit of the people," Mr. Buthelezi added.

He said South Africa's new coalition government faced a difficult task, adding that the politics of the dominant ANC partner differed in many respects from Inkatha's.

"And yet, through this so-called government of national unity, we have to operate together jointly as a cabinet. It is not going to be easy," he warned. But he assured Mr. Mandela of his cooperation.

Mr. Buthelezi made it clear the IFP's election win in Kwazulu-Natal meant "the government of Kwazulu-Natal is an IFP government."

"The future of this region in relation to everything that has still to be settled can only be settled with the full agreement of the IFP and its leadership."

Mr. Buthelezi turned to his demand for a stronger federal system than the ANC is prepared to endorse, saying: "The struggle for freedom and federalism has just begun."

"Federalism will only allow us to be ruled by the leaders of our region and not by Pretoria. Under federalism our leader will be someone who lives in our region and who therefore understands our needs."

Eased rules based on right of return

(Continued from page 1)

and amended to go along with the developments across the bridge."

He said that if Jordan continues to receive guarantees that protect the Palestinians' rights of staying in their homeland, "Jordan may feel that there will be no need for the department of inspection and control."

The department was established in 1982 as the authority at the Ministry of Interior directly in charge of the affairs of West Bank citizens and those carrying family reunification papers for the occupied territories.

Mr. Hamad pointed out that the new crossing measures, issued at the instructions of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan when he met with the secretary-generals of the different ministries two weeks ago, are a mix of easing up of measures adopted in 1988, when Jordan severed legal and administrative ties with the West Bank, and others that were taken since then.

He said that one of the procedures that was stopped by the new regulations was taking travellers' documents at the bridge to make them visit the inspections and control department to follow up on their cases.

"We initially took these measures when Israel allowed only 10,000 to 15,000 Palestinian labourers, out of around 120,000 to work in Israel," Mr. Hamad explained.

"Israel at that time started giving young Palestinians exit permits but after making them sign a commitment not to return for number of years," Mr. Hamad said, pointing out that Jordan's measure at the time was to guard against Palestinian youth running away to better working conditions only to find that they had lost their right of return.

He said the Ministry of Interior had already prepared studies on ways to facilitate the crossings of the King Hussein Bridge in anticipation of any improvement on the Palestinian front.

"When His Royal Highness raised the issue with us we were prepared to take the

necessary steps," Mr. Hamad said.

"We announced the easing up of procedures at the bridge but we continued to guard the principle that has always guided us and that is to protect the rights of the Palestinians," he said. "We want our procedures to be humane and civilised," he added.

Election law

Mr. Hamad told the group of journalists that his ministry had prepared the "administrative and technical mechanism" for a new election law but had not yet prepared a draft for the division of voter districts or the number of parliamentary seats, which he said, "will be determined by the final arrangements for civil districts."

"We do not know yet whether the Kingdom will be treated as one voting district or whether it will follow the division of civil districts," Mr. Hamad said.

He also said that anyone who enjoys a Jordanian nationality "will be allowed to vote regardless of his origin and whether he is residing in Jordan or outside."

In answer to a specific question on whether Jordanian nationals who also carry Palestinian reunification papers — which amount to a residency in the occupied territories — will be allowed to vote in the next elections, Mr. Hamad stressed that those who "carry the Jordanian nationality will be able to vote regardless of where they reside and those in the West Bank are no exception if they carry the Jordanian nationality."

He pointed out that this excludes holders of the two-year passports since that passport is a travel document and not proof of nationality.

He said that the new "administrative and technical" amendments include allowing citizens to register according to their national numbers given to them by the Civil Service Commission and not by their family books as had been the practice in the 1989 elections.

An important amendment to the Elections Law, Mr. Hamad said, is that the voting and the vote count will be conducted at the same centre and

ballots will not be moved to the governor's office to avoid "criticism or unfounded charges" of foul play. Other amendments include an extension on the registration period to three months from 15 days.

He said that the principle of finding a mechanism which will allow Jordanian expatriate communities to vote in their area of residence is being studied, but that the final decision over "whether registration has to be made in Jordan or whether it can be done in Jordanian embassies outside has not been reached."

On his meeting he had with the heads of political parties in the Kingdom last Thursday, Mr. Hamad said that the two and a half hour encounter served to "strengthen the relationship between the Ministry of Interior and the secretary-generals of political parties."

He said that some of the participants asked that the government "help allocate funds for the operations of political parties," while some others argued against the concept.

"I asked them to put their request in a memorandum signed by all of them and that I would carry their request to the government," Mr. Hamad said.

The minister also pledged to provide the political parties with any information they need on agreements signed by Jordan or protocols with other countries.

"Each party will appoint a

Christopher to visit Jericho

JERICHO, occupied West Bank (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is expected to visit Palestinian-ruled Jericho on Tuesday during a Middle East tour, a Palestinian official said on Saturday.

Saeed Erekat, a Jericho resident named to the Palestinian authority which will administer Gaza and Jericho, told Reuters that Mr. Christopher would be the first foreign secretary to visit the autonomous areas.

Mr. Christopher's shuttle will focus on stalemate Israel-Syria peace negotiations.

U.S. officials said earlier this week that Mr. Christopher was likely to travel to Damascus from Geneva on Sunday, go to Israel probably on Monday evening and return to Washington on Tuesday. They did not rule out one other stop in the region.

The United States was the key mediator in the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord signed on May 4.

Palestinian and U.S. security personnel were already planning for Mr. Christopher's visit, Dr. Erekat said. He is scheduled to meet Palestinian leaders at police headquarters in the town.

Israel transferred authority to a Palestinian police force in Jericho. The army has also handed over large parts of the Gaza Strip to the PLO police this week.

Syria urges U.S. pressure

Syria urged the United States on the eve of the Christopher visit to Damascus to put pressure on Israel to accept full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

It renewed its rejection of partial deals and said only a comprehensive settlement based on U.N. resolutions and the land for peace principle could bring peace to the region.

The official daily Al Thawra said Mr. Christopher could break a deadlock in the Syrian-Israeli talks if he pressured Israel to accept withdrawal.

"Washington should play the role of a full broker and honest mediator and force Israel to accept full withdrawal from the Golan, and the rest of the Arab lands, to guarantee success for Christopher's tour," the newspaper said.

representative who will stay in touch with the ministry over information requests," he said.

On requests for air time on Jordan Television or the inclusion of their papers' editorials on the "press brief programme" carried on JTV, Mr. Hamad said that he explained that since the parties have their own newspapers they could work to "provide something different" in those papers since television time "would be completely taken up" if all 22 political parties were vying for equal time.

He said that the secretary-generals complained about the small percentage of Jordanians who are willing to become members of political parties.

"But I told them that this problem cannot be blamed on the government. Let them come up with something new and practical, and they will see better results."

On complaints that the government "has been intervening in the running of professional associations," Mr. Hamad said that he told them "that they are the ones interfering in the work of the professional associations by politicising bodies that should be working on improving conditions for their members."

On specific complaints of intervention in the associations, Mr. Hamad said, "I advised them that problems like this should be taken to courts where the law can be the decisive word."

Yemenis fight; Somalis killed

(Continued from page 1)

for the Coordination between Parties and the Masses, Organisations and Nationalists in Aden had sent a message to the league urging it to protect "towns and citizens against all acts of aggression."

The league should intervene to see that a reconciliation accord signed in Amman in February between the two parties is implemented, added the radio.

The Arab League delegation has hopes to deliver a call from the league's secretary general, Esmat Abdul Meguid, for an immediate ceasefire.

A northern spokesman in Sanaa said the meeting was finally likely to take place on

Saturday.

Earlier southern military officials said their warplanes were mounting raid after raid on the Daleh region, where correspondents saw seven northern soldiers dead on the side of the road, just five kilometres from the village.

Hundreds of residents have fled Daleh and surrounding villages, seeking safety in Aden.

Clashes were also taking place in the Abyan region, east of Aden, but fighting had eased in Kharaz, on the coast 120 kilometres to the west of the city.

The ruler of Bahrain, Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, Saturday joined the ceasefire calls

Miami robbers fleece tourists aboard bus

MIAMI (R) — Five Norwegian tourists were robbed and one was slightly injured by a pair of robbers who boarded the airport shuttle bus that was driving them to their hotel early Friday, police said. One of the robbers punched a Norwegian woman in the face with his fist, police Detective Marie Duboulay said. "She did suffer minor injuries and she is okay," Ms. Duboulay said.

The robbery was the latest in a series of well-publicised attacks on foreign tourists to this southeastern state, which has campaigned to assuage the fears of overseas visitors. The hotel shuttle bus picked up the five Norwegians at Miami International Airport about 12:45 a.m. EDT (1645 GMT) police said. Two "very well dressed" men in their 20s also boarded the bus at the airport, she said. "One black male pointed a gun at the driver and ordered him to drive on Highway 836. The other black male started to remove property from the other passengers," Ms. Duboulay said. The robbers ordered the driver to stop about two miles (3.2 km) east of the airport and fled on foot, police said. They were still at large. After meeting with police, the Norwegians spent the night at an undisclosed hotel, then boarded the ship, Nordic Empress for a Caribbean cruise as planned. The Norwegian consul in Miami, Odd Holm, said the visitors were robbed of jewelry, cash and some of their luggage. Two also lost their passports. He described them as young people who were in good spirits despite the ordeal. "They were just concerned about getting off on their cruise and getting a new passport from us," Mr. Holm said.

Chief constable caught in speeding crackdown

LONDON (R) — A police crackdown on speeding on a road in central England caught an unlikely offender — the officer in charge of the country's police force. Keith Povey, chief constable of Leicestershire, was fined £350 (\$520) and banned from driving for a week, a police spokesman said.

Chief Povey, 51, was caught driving at 80 miles per hour (130 km per hour) in February on a stretch of road with a limit of 50 miles an hour (80 km per hour), where his force began a crackdown on speeding just days before. "He was caught by a speed trap camera on road junction 21 on a roadway in Leicestershire," the spokeswoman said. Chief Povey's solicitor David Thomas said the chief constable suffered a momentary lapse of concentration.

Magna's companion gets \$84m

SANTA ANA, Calif. (R) — A jury awarded \$84 million to a woman who lived with the founder of the company that makes the popular Mag-Lite flashlights. The eight-woman, four-man panel in the lawsuit in Santa Ana Superior Court ruled that Tony Maglica, who lived with Cherie Halasz for 23 years, had breached his fiduciary duty to the woman.

The award capped a six-week trial that was followed by a national television audience on court TV. Ms. Halasz, 60, had claimed that she and Mr. Maglica, an immigrant from Croatia, had an oral agreement that entitled her to half of his possessions. She had sought half of Mr. Maglica's Ontario, California flashlight manufacturing business, which her lawyers valued at \$400 million.

Ms. Halasz contended that she began helping Mr. Maglica develop his flashlight company, Mag Instruments Inc., in 1974. Mr. Maglica, 64, countered that Ms. Halasz signed an agreement in 1976 promising not to seek any of his assets. The jury voted 10-2 in Ms. Halasz's favour, one more than is necessary in a civil lawsuit.

The panel ruled that the property agreement Mr. Maglica alleged Ms. Halasz signed was unenforceable and lacked the element of consent. Although Mr. Maglica and Ms. Halasz were never married, she used his last name. The two split up in 1992 after Ms. Halasz discovered that Mr. Maglica planned to will company stock to children he has from a past marriage.